

JEREMIAH BELL JETER











J.B. Jeter,

## THE

# RECOLLECTIONS OF A LONG LIFE.



WITH INTRODUCTION BY J. L. M. CURRY, I.L.D.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS.

## INTRODUCTION—J. L. M. CURRY, LL. D.

#### PREFACE.

| CHAPTER I—THE SCHOOLS  | 3   |
|--|-----|
| School-house architecture—Primitive equipment—Methods of discipline—Lewis Parker—The Bedford boys. |     |
|  |     |
| CHAPTER II—SCHOOL AMUSEMENTS   | . 9 |
| Popular sports—Turning out the schoolmaster—"School-butter."                                       |     |
| CHAPTER III—THE STATE OF SOCIETY   | 14  |
| Drinking customs-Muster days-Hunting and shooting-Locks unknown.                                   |     |
| CHAPTER IV—THE STATE OF SOCIETY (Continued)  | 19  |
| Churches and Sunday-schools—The preaching of the day—Polemics—The "holy tone."                     |     |
| CHÀPTER V—NOTABLE MINISTERS  | 24  |
| Lorenzo Dow—Jeremiah Minter—Conrad Speece.   | # T |
| Botch20 Dow - Jereman Minter—Contact Speece.   |     |
| CHAPTER VI-THE STRAWBERRY ASSOCIATION  | 29  |
| William Duncan—John Anthony—John King—John W. Kelly.   |     |
| CHAPTER VII—TEMPERANCE   | 33  |
| Formation of the Virginia Temperance Society.  |     |
| CHAPTER VIII—THE GREAT REVIVAL   | 38  |
| The summer of 1821—The revival in Bedford and contiguous counties—Thousands converted.             |     |
| CHAPTER IX-MY EXPERIENCE   | 43  |
| First prayer—The burden of sin.  |     |
| CHAPTER X—My Experience (Continued)  | 47  |
| Meeting with Daniel Witt—The great question decided—Assailed by a painful temptation.              |     |

|  | Page  |
|--|-------|
| CHAPTER XI-MY EXPERIENCE (Continued)   | 54    |
| Further struggles towards the light—Finding rest.  |       |
| CHAPTER XII-MY ENTRANCE INTO THE MINISTRY  | 57    |
| Baptized by Elder William Harris—First religious address—Early sermons—Anxiety as to divine call.                        |       |
| CHAPTER XIII-MY EARLY LABORS IN THE MINISTRY   | 62    |
| "Two Bedford plow-boys"—Preaching tour through Franklin and neighboring counties.  |       |
| CHAPTER XIV—SLAVERY  | 67    |
| Early unfavorable impressions—Discussion in the convention of 1829-'30—The pamphlet of Dr. Stringfellow.                 |       |
| CHAPTER XV-ODDS AND ENDS   | 72    |
| A rain theory—The mystery of horse-shocing—Peter Burns.  |       |
| CHAPTER XVI—ODDS AND ENDS (Continued)  | 76    |
| A spelling match—False economy—The war of 1812.  |       |
| CHAPTER XVII—ASCETICISM  | 82    |
| Strictness of the early Methodists—Baptist views—Sinfulness of laughing.   |       |
| CHAPTER XVIII-MY EARLY ASSOCIATES IN THE MINISTRY  | 87    |
| William Harris-William Leftwich.   |       |
| Chapter XIX—My Early Associates in the Ministry ( $Continued$ ) .  | 92    |
| William Davis—His discussion with Mr. Hunter.  |       |
| CHAPTER XX-MY EARLY ASSOCIATES IN THE MINISTRY (Continued) .   | 97    |
| John S. Lee—Moses Greer—Joshua Burnett.  |       |
| CHAPTER XXI—PREVALENT SUPERSTITIONS ,  | 102   |
| Supposed witchcraft of Mrs. Gatson—The author sees a ghost—Simon Bailey's testimony.                                     |       |
| CHAPTER XXII—THE ORGANIZATION OF THE BAPTIST GENERAL ASSOCIATION OF VIRGINIA   |       |
| First view of Richmond—Meeting in the Second church—Sermons by various brethren—An affecting thought—A comical incident. |       |
| CHAPTER XXIII—A MISSIONARY TOUR  | . 113 |
| Visit to the New River Association-Through the southwestern  |       |

| TABLE OF CONTENTS.   |
|--|
| Page CHAPTER XXIV—MY RESIDENCE IN SUSSEX COUNTY  |
| At the home of Elder Chambliss—Ordination at High Hills.   |
| CHAPTER XXV-THE PORTSMOUTH ASSOCIATION 122   |
| First Steamboat voyage—Potter's field—Dr. Schoolfield's tender conscience.                                     |
| CHAPTER XXVI-A MISSIONARY MEETING IN RICHMOND 128  |
| Staughton and Dagg.  |
| CHAPTER XXVII—ALEXANDER CAMPBELL   |
| His sermons at Upper Essex and Bruington—An estimate of his talents and character.                             |
| CHAPTER XXVIII—MY SOJOURN IN CAMPBELL COUNTY   |
| At the Appomattox Association—Abner W. Clopton.  |
| CHAPTER XXIX—THE NORTHERN NECK   |
| Addison Hall—Deacon Dunaway—Straughan and Lunsford—Morattico church.   |
| CHAPTER XXX—CHANGES IN THE NORTHERN NECK   |
| Sued for slander—Called to the pastorate of the First church, Richmond.  |
| CHAPTER XXXI—Northern Neck Camp-Meetings   |
| Meeting at Ball's Woods—A young flood—Conversion of John Grin-   |
| stead.   |
| CHAPTER XXXII—Northern Neck Camp-Meetings (Continued) 159  |
| A great religious awakening—Visits of Drs. Reed and Matheson, of England.                                      |
| CHAPTER XXXIII—A VOYAGE TO BALTIMORE   |
| Experience at Peale's Museum-Elders Findlay and Ries-A ventriloquist.  |
| CHAPTER XXXIV—VIRGINIA STATE CONVENTION OF 1829-'30 169  |
| Some of its famous men and measures—Madison, Monroe, Marshall, Tazewell, Giles, Randolph, Barbour, and others. |
| CHAPTER XXXV—MEMORABLE EVENTS  |
| The Southampton insurrection—The cholera in 1832.  |
| CHAPTER XXXVI-THE BAPTIST TRIENNIAL CONVENTION 178   |
| Visit to New York—Recollections of Dr. Wayland and others.   |

| Page   |
|--|
| CHAPTER XXXVII—THE BAPTIST TRIENNIAL CONVENTION (Continued), 183   |
| Its session in Richmond in 1835—Sermons by distinguished preachers—The last harmonious meeting of this great body.                                   |
| CHAPTER XXXVIII—NORTHERN NECK DEACONS  |
| Rawleigh Dunaway and Thomas S. Sydnor.   |
| CHAPTER XXXIX—Northern Neck Deacons (Continued) 193  |
| Epa. Norris. His experience with the British soldiers in the war of 1812. His views as to wearing collars, etc.                                      |
| CHAPTER XL—NORTHERN NECK INCIDENTS   |
| Crossing the Rappahannock—A fall of plaster at White chapel—Conversion of Dr. Kirk.  |
| CHAPTER XLI—RESIDENCE IN RICHMOND  |
| A well-organized church—A deep personal bereavement—Removal to St. Louis.  |
| CHAPTER XLII—THE ORGANIZATION OF THE FIRST AFRICAN CHURCH IN RICHMOND  |
| Serious difficulties—Successful pastorate of Dr. Ryland—Dr. Plumer's noble offer.  |
| CHAPTER XLIII—THE WAR ON THE THEATRE 214   |
| Dr. Plumer's attack, and the manager's retaliation.  |
| CHAPTER XLIV—RICHMOND COLLEGE  |
| Formation of the Virginia Baptist Education Society—The Mania<br>for manual labor schools—Removal of the college to "Columbia,"<br>its present site. |
| CHAPTER XLV—POPULAR DELUSIONS  |
| The Morus multicaulis craze—The gold mania.  |
| CHAPTER XLVI—THE DIVISION OF THE TRIENNIAL CONVENTION 229  |
| Mecting in Philadelphia—An exciting scenc—Meeting of the General<br>Board in Providence.   |
| CHAPTER XLVII—THE FORMATION OF THE SOUTHERN BAPTIST CON-<br>VENTION  |
| Journey to Augusta-A remarkable body of Southern Baptists.   |
| CHAPTER XLVIII—A GREAT REVIVAL   |
| Preaching of Elder Robords—Four hundred added to the churches—   |

| TABLE OF CONTENTS.   | VII  |
|--|------|
| CHAPTER XLIX-A DAY WITH THE UNITED STATES SENATE   | Page |
|  | 243  |
| Sketches of Clay, Calhoun, Webster, Benton, Rives, and Preston.  |      |
| CHAPTER L—USEFUL INVENTIONS  | 248  |
| The steamboat—Daguerreotypes—Lucifer matches—Railroads—The   |      |
| Telegraph.   |      |
| CHAPTER LI—A TRIP TO THE WEST  | 252  |
|  | 200  |
| A selfish traveller—Up the Illinois river during a flood—At Niagara Falls.   |      |
| CHAPTER LII—A TRIP TO FLORIDA  | 258  |
| Among the invalids—A storm at sea.   |      |
|  |      |
| CHAPTER LIII-KNAPP'S VISIT TO RICHMOND   | 263  |
| His "side remarks" on slavery—Estimate of his talents and character—Uncle Davy's coat of many colors.                      |      |
| CHAPTER LIV—CAMP-MEETING SCENES  | 268  |
| A Pentecostal season—In Culpeper and Caroline.   |      |
| CHAPTER LV—THE GREAT MASONIC EXCITEMENT  | 273  |
| The memorable Morgan incident—The anti-Masons nominate Mr. Wirt for the Presidency.  |      |
| CHAPTER LVI—DISTINGUISHED MINISTERS  | 278  |
| Andrew Broaddus as a reader of hymns—His brilliant imagination and graceful manner—Hon. R. M. T. Hunter's estimate of him. |      |
| CHAPTER LVII—REV. JOHN KERR  | 284  |
| Sketch of his life—Broaddus and Kerr compared.   |      |
| CHAPTER LVIII—REMOVAL TO ST. LOUIS   | 290  |
| A heterogeneous congregation—Sending out colonies—A few remarks.   |      |
| CHAPTER LIX—Spiritism  | 295  |
| A rather remarkable seance—Moral bearing of "spiritualistic" phenomena.  |      |
| CHAPTER LX—A PERILOUS JOURNEY  | 300  |
| Fleeing from cholera—A doleful night among the sufferers.  |      |

## TABLE OF CONTENTS.

VIII

| Page  | 2 |
|---|---|
| CHAPTER LXI-FASHIONS  | H |
| The "breeches" of other days—Survival of the high-crowned hat— Feminine follies—The "navarino" bonnet and the "Grecian bend," |   |
| remaine formes—The havarmo bonnet and the orectan bend.   |   |
| CHAPTER LXII—CHANGES FOR THE BETTER   | ) |
| Improvement in the ministry—Better meeting-houses—More order-   |   |
| ly congregations.   |   |
| CHAPTER LXIII—CHANGES FOR THE WORSE   | 5 |
| Diminished unction and pathos in the pulpit—Less fervency in sacred song—Baptists less carefully indoctrinated.               |   |
|   |   |
| CHAPTER LXIV—THE ESTIMATE OF LIFE 320   | ) |
| The blessed buoyancy of youth—Sobriety of age—The brighter side—The foundation of hope.                                       |   |

## INTRODUCTION.

BY

### J. L. M. CURRY, LL. D.

So rapid is the progress of events in this new world of ours, so marked are the changes which occur in religious, social, political, and economic forces "through nearly three quarters of a century," a life of a man, active and influential in any department of affairs, covers a period not so much spanned by years as by transactions which in older countries and civilizations would have required centuries. The centre of our population moves westward every decade with a great stride, notwithstanding the populous cities on or near the Atlantic coast. Inventions multiply and affect industries and modes of living beyond what romances like Utopia would include among the fabulous. When Dr. Jeter was born there were no railways, no steamboats, no phonographs, no magnificent system of telegraphy and telephony, no McCormick reapers, no lucifer matches, no breech-loading guns, no dynamite.

These reminiscences of a thoughtful and intelligent observer embrace years than which, the advent of the Christ excepted, no equal number in the past are of more thrilling interest. The recollections, narrated with such simple frankness and ingenuousness, give one a more distinct portraiture of the "men and events" and the times than would the most minute recital of inventions and improvements. They are the more fascinating and instructive when we recall the positions the writer filled and the personal characteristics which give piquancy and value to what he did and observed. With varied experience, an inquisitive mind, an acute intellect, accurate memory, honesty of investigation and judgment, frankness of utterance, ambition to excel, freedom from conceit or unworthy prejudice, transparency of character, hopefulness and buoyancy undimmed by years, what he has

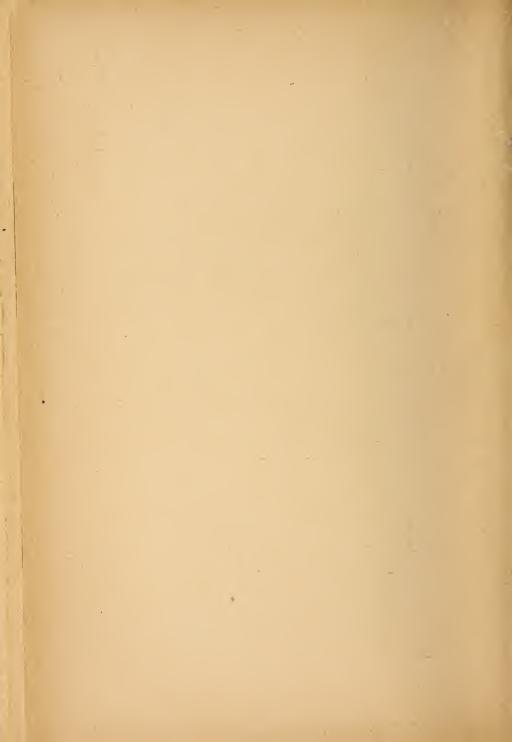
written of contemporary people and things has special value as being instructive literature and a contribution to history.

Born and bred in the rural districts, living on a farm among the common people, with only such religious and educational advantages as such environments afforded, and whatever of benefit, and there is much, that comes from being brought up in the country—these things affected his personal and mental habits through his entire life, and gave him some of those peculiarities which continually "cropped out" in his writings and addresses and added to his power and influence.

- 1. In early manhood he became an evangelist, or missionary, and this itineracy brought him into association with many phases of human character. His own religious experience was interwoven in his creed and preaching and helped to give him access to the masses and influence in winning them to Christ. As a sermonizer he was analytical, logical, expository, and instructive. In preaching he was sometimes borne away by strong feeling and carried his hearers into the higher realms of emotion and imagination. For years he was a bishop of large city churches and exerted extraordinary influence in molding the opinions, forming the character, and shaping the conduct of his flocks.
- 2. He was a wise counsellor. His pastoral duties called this faculty into frequent exercise. His commanding ability and the universal respect in which his denomination held him made his advice to be much sought after. Nothing more delighted him than to reconcile differences, heal alienations, and compose individual and ecclesiastical strifes. As a member of the Board of Trustees of Richmond College, of the Female Institute, of the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, and of the Board of Foreign Missions, and as a member of our national and semi-national denominational organizations, he was unselfish, punctual, sagacious, and wise, and when he spoke there was generally acquiescence in his views. He was not, however, arbitrary, dictatorial, or imperious. Firm and conscientious in his own convictions, he commended manliness and independence in others. With a prescient mind, ever on the outlook for good, he would weigh and cheerfully accept and adopt the suggestions of others. The writer of this Introduction was present once when, with his fruitful mind and anxiety to do good, he inquired of a Richmond lady what profitable

direction, outside of direct church work, Baptist beneficence might take. She, with much earnestness, recommended a Home for Aged Women. The matter was discussed for some time, and on leaving he said he would think more about the suggestion. A few days afterwards he returned thoroughly satisfied and full of enthusiasm, and thus originated the institution which enlists sympathies and energies of so many ladies and is noiselessly doing such widening good.

3. Dr. Jeter was most widely known as an editor, and while acting as such he prepared for his paper these Recollections. There were few current Biblical, theological, or religious questions which he had not carefully thought out, and from a full mind, a fountain of wisdom, came those writings which made him an oracle in the Baptist Israel. At first his editorials, lucidly and logically written, were in form and make-up somewhat sermonic, but with practice he acquired facility of newspaper composition, rarely rewriting, and a style which is a model of pure and vigorous English. He carried into the editorial sanctum the prayerfulness, conscientiousness, loyalty to truth, zeal to do good, which had controlled him in the pulpit. He made the Religious Herald a great newspaper, an "institution" of great resources and potential influence. What he wrote, as what he preached, was for the highest benefit of those who received. In every vocation his purpose was to do good, and as the result, in part, of his exalted aim the journal attained its attractiveness and usefulness. He stamped upon it his own individuality. He rose above and despised all meannesses, all strifes for mere victory, all effort to win success by means that were not lofty, elevating, and in accordance with the spirit of the gospel. He was no seeker after popularity, never modified his opinions for sectional, sectarian, or sinister ends, and was actuated in patriotism and religion by a broad, generous catholicity.



# THE RECOLLECTIONS OF A LONG LIFE.

POR years past, from time to time, and especially of late, I have been urged by brethren whose judgment I respect to write out and publish my reminiscences of men and events, now extending through nearly three-quarters of a century. Several causes have hitherto prevented my compliance with the request. Some of these I will briefly mention. The unavoidable egotism, the incessant repetition of the great I, or the frequent circumlocutions to shun its use, in the execution of the task, is not according to my taste, and would probably be more offensive to the taste of the reader than it is to mine. My life having been passed, much of it, in obscurity, and but little of it among the men and the scenes which go to make up the world's history, I feared that my recollections, even if vividly detailed, would seem to cultured and well-informed minds as mere trifles. Besides, having kept no journal of my life, and having access to few sources by which my memory might be refreshed, it is to be apprehended that my reminiscences would be meagre, and, in some particulars, inaccurate. I have concluded, however, after much consideration, to comply with the request of my friends, and record the principal recollections of my checkered life. Should they fail to interest the public, I shall, at least, have the consolation of knowing that I followed the counsel of persons deemed judicious.

It is not my purpose to write an autobiography, though in many of the events and scenes to be recorded I bore a part

more or less conspicuous, which it would be mere affectation to attempt to conceal. The discerning reader will give me credit for such a measure of modesty as may be indicated by the general style and spirit of the articles. I may add, it is not my purpose to compose a connected detail of events. This would be impracticable from memory; and tedious and useless, even if practicable. I shall endeavor to give faithfully my recollections of notable persons, stirring events, and impressive scenes, including matters social, literary, and political, but chiefly religious, with little regard to chronological order.

In carrying out my plan, it will be necessary to repeat much that, in sermons, memoirs, editorials, and the like, has hereto-fore been published. Indeed, having been so long accustomed to the use of the pen, it is quite impossible for me to know, in many cases, whether remembered incidents have been published, and, if so, in what connection and with what minuteness of detail.

I must invoke the candor of the reader, both as to matters of taste and of fact. There is no absolute standard of taste. I can only promise that I will record nothing which, in my view, does not comport with the design and dignity of my articles. As to matters of fact, I can only pledge my veracity. I am painfully conscious that, after the lapse of more than three-quarters of a century, my memory is far from being infallible. I am quite sure that, should my faculties be preserved, the material statements will be true, even if the minute details should in some cases be-inaccurate.

### THE SCHOOLS.

BEDFORD is a Virginia county, lying between the James and Staunton rivers, and at the foot of the Blue Ridge. The celebrated Otter Peaks are on the northwestern border of the county. It is distinguished for the number, ability, and usefulness of the ministers of the leading evangelical denominations who have been reared within its limits. At the house of my maternal grandfather, Jeremiah Hatcher, and in full view of the towering mountains, my eyes first saw the light. My early recollections relate chiefly to events and scenes in this old and respectable county.

I pass over many of my childhood memories, which, however interesting they might be to the young, are hardly compatible with the design and gravity of my articles. It may be proper, however, to notice the educational advantages enjoyed in the county, especially that part of it in which I was reared, the Fork of Otter, in the days of my boyhood. The schoolhouses were of a primitive style of achitecture, bearing a very slight resemblance to the Doric, Grecian, or Roman order. They were constructed of logs, notched at the corners, daubed with clay, covered with boards, kept in their position by weighty poles laid across them, and lighted, not by glass, but through an aperture between the logs, at a convenient height, which might be closed for comfort by a plank suspended above it on leathern hinges. They had wide chimneys. Those who have seen them need no description of them, and to those who have not seen them, no description could impart any just conception of them. These houses were furnished with benches, without backs, on each of which a dozen or more pupils might sit in close contact. A chair and a table for the teacher, with one or more good rods, completed the furniture of the schoolroom.

The teachers were in admirable correspondence with their school-houses. Persons too lazy to work, and unfit for other profitable employments, were usually engaged as pedagogues. School-books were scarce, but of divers kinds. Dilworth's spelling-book had gone out of print, but many copies of it were in existence, having been used and preserved by the parents, and possibly the grand-parents, of the pupils. Highly favored were the children who owned Webster's spelling-book, then just coming into use. For reading, every pupil brought to the school such book or books as were found in his family—they might be the Columbian Orator, Scott's Lessons, the Arabian Nights, Robinson Crusoe, the Bible or fragments of it, or anything else in print, historical or fictitious, didactic or heroic, solemn or amusing. This diversity in school-books was not so inconvenient as a modern teacher might suppose. Schools were not divided into classes, but every pupil "said" or read his own lesson. A slate and pencil, with paper and ink for the advanced students, completed the outfit for an education in the "Old-Field Schools." In most of them neither a dictionary, a grammar, nor an arithmetic could be found.

This outfit, meagre as it was, was quite equal to the demands of the curriculum, comprehending only reading, writing, and ciphering as "far as the rule of three." This last art was taught by means of a manuscript book belonging to the teacher, in which the arithmetical questions were not only propounded, but the process of their solution was fully recorded in figures. From this source the pupils received their sums, and to this standard it was required that their answers should conform. Boys, after toiling days or weeks over a sum in long division, would go up to the teacher to report their answers, and to hear the appalling words: "Not right." They would then have to go over the tedious and perplexing calculation, with the probability of arriving at a similar result. One poor fellow labored three months at a single sum.

The rod bore an important part in the discipline of these primitive schools. Fortunately or unfortunately, the forests furnished switches which, for toughness and punitive power, threw into the shade the far-famed birchen rod. The virtues of the hickory were well understood by all the disciplinarians of the school-room, and its penal application was held in extreme horror by all the unruly urchins of the region. It was employed with more or less freedom and severity, according to the temper and views of the pedagogue. Some irascible teachers used it, occasionally, at least, with unquestionable cruelty; while others employed it to terrify rather than punish. Castigation was inflicted usually by retail; but in some cases by wholesale. One teacher frequently flogged his pupils by the bench. Ten or a dozen were called up at once, and each received his share of the whipping. The punishment was not severe. While those at the head of the line were receiving their stripes, those at the other end were sniggering, and by the time the infliction was ended all were in a glee.

It is time to inquire after the attainments of the pupils in these plain, rural schools. Of course, they did not learn much. If most of the teachers had ever heard of accent or emphasis, they furnished to their scholars no proof of their knowledge. Of punctuation, they had some vague conception. He was deemed the greatest proficient in reading who could read the fastest. The teacher would often call out to the pupil, reading with breathless velocity: "Mind your stops!" and the teaching in punctuation was limited to this stern command. Spelling was the only branch of learning cultivated successfully in these schools. The pupils spelled in classes, the best spellers ascending to the head and the worst descending to the foot of the class. By this means an emulation was excited among them, which made them quite ready in spelling the words found in their meagre school vocabulary.

All the schools in the county were not alike. A grammar school was taught in the neighborhood of Liberty, the metropolis of the county, by a Mr. Flood, which had quite a local reputation for the thoroughness of its instruction. In this school my lamented friend, the late Dr. D. Witt, had the good fortune to be taught. Considerable improvement was made during my school days in the quality of the teaching in the

schools. In some cases, what was lacked in merit was made up in pretension. One teacher proposed to give instruction, not only in the common branches of learning, but in English grammar, and in "the arts and sciences" as well. As his capacity for instruction in these branches was not in requisition in the school, I never knew, and cannot now conjecture, what "arts and sciences" he proposed to teach. I enjoyed the advantage of his instruction in grammar. I was taught to commit the large print in Murray's grammar to memory from which attainment I afterwards derived great benefit; but if the teacher ever uttered a sentence which gave any intimation of his acquaintance with the design of grammar, I have no recollection of it, and think that if he had, I should remember it.

To one of my teachers, Lewis Parker, I was under great obligation. He was a poor young man reared in the county. His opportunities for acquiring an education had been meagre, and his literary attainments were small; but he was conscious of his deficiency in learning, thirsted for knowledge, and labored earnestly to instruct his pupils. He had Walker's Pronouncing Dictionary in his school, and paid attention to accent, emphasis, and punctuation in his instruction. I was greatly indebted to him for his tuition, and have long lamented that his early death prevented me from making this acknowledgment to him.

"There is no royal road to learning." Certainly no such road led through the Bedford schools in my boyhood days. We sat on no cushioned seats, handled no gilt-bound volumes, received no tempting premiums, and feasted on no dainty luncheons. Going to school was no holiday procession, but a stern reality. Many of the pupils walked three or four miles, over stony paths, barefooted, to reach the schools. In winter the attendance was larger than in the summer, because more boys could then be spared from the labors of the farm. The worse the day the larger the school, as the greater number of children were released from home services. The pupils had invariably to cut in the forests, and bear on their shoulders, the fuel by which their school-rooms were warmed.

This system of education had its advantages.

"Its studies turned no student pale,
But took the eel of science by the tail."

If it did not make scholars, it made vigorous, self-reliant men and women. In those days and in that region neuralgia had never been heard of. The girls and boys knew what hunger meant, but were strangers to dyspepsia. They had muscles, if they had not refinement. They had brains, too—healthy, well developed brains; and though, in general, there was not much in them, they were capable of thinking and of indefinite improvement.

Nor was this all. The art of reading lies at the foundation of all learning. The man who can read has access to all the treasures of history, science, and philosophy; can revel amid all the charms of fiction and poetry, and can master all the intricacies of statesmanship and all the secrets of professional knowledge. His learning must be acquired with greater toil and with slower progress than if he had received early and thorough educational training, but when he reaches it he may have it all the more perfectly at his command because of the perplexities through which he acquired it.

Not all the Bedford boys of the olden time became distinguished. In the best taught and best regulated schools only a small proportion of the pupils become scholars or prominent in life. Quite a fair number of the youth trained in these ill supplied and ill taught country schools became distinguished, if not for their learning, at least for their good sense, their practical wisdom, and their usefulness. Some with their meagre educational advantages, through long years, struggled up the rugged hill of knowledge to no mean elevation. Others found in contiguous regions means of intellectual improvement denied to them in their native county.

The lesson taught by this article is, that the young need not be discouraged because their means for early education are poor. If they have brains, industry, perseverance, a determination to avail themselves of every opportunity for self-improvement, the capacity for reading their mother tongue, so freighted with the choicest treasures of knowledge, opens to them the possibility of a career alike honorable to themselves and useful to society. Let them aim high, labor hard, esteem nothing done while aught remains to be done, seek to please God, and they will worthily fulfill their destiny.

## SCHOOL AMUSEMENTS.

THE love of amusements is a human instinct, ineradicable, irrepressible, and universal. It was certainly in full activity among the boys and girls of Bedford more than sixty years ago. It culminated among them in the hour called, in all the schools, "Play-time." It was the season appropriated to lunch, but chiefly to sports. The pupil might love his books, but far more he loved the hour for his amusements; he might eat his lunch with a sharp relish, but he had a much keener appetite for the sports of the play-hour. All the scholars looked forward with thrilling interest to the time when the shadow of the sun on the door-sill of the school-house indicated the arrival of meridian. All ears were then attentive to hear the words by which the commencement of the joyous "Play-time" was invariably announced by the schoolmaster: "Lay by your books."

That sentence instantly changed the school-room into a babel. Books, slates, pens and paper were cast aside, and the demon of uproar seemed to be unchained. The homely lunch was speedily disposed of, and all were ready for the desired amusements. The girls betook themselves to the shady bowers and all the mimic arts of housekeeping. The sports of the boys took a wider range. The favorite amusements of the time were marbles, cat, base-ball, prisoner's base, steal-goods, and the like. The popular athletic sports were running, wrestling, jumping, chasing the fox, and boxing, an exercise that sometimes caused more pain than pleasure. Some of the lads attained to great expertness in these plays. I remember one who was an incomparable dodger. The most skillful thrower might stand close by him, and casting a ball at him with the greatest care and force, would be more likely to miss than to hit him. The amusements were brought to a close by some boy, of

strong lungs, commissioned by the master to cry at the top of his voice: "Come to books!"

The sports of the school were not limited to play-time. The turning out of the master, as it was called, was an institution in all the schools. It occurred on this wise: On the approach of a holiday, the larger boys, acting in concert, would find an opportunity, when the master was out of the house, to shut the door, and refuse to open it until he consented to grant them the desired holiday—a request which, with some show of resistance and indignation, he was usually glad to concede. Sometimes the scholars, persuaded of their own power, would seize the teacher, drag him out of the house, and force him to accede to their demand.

There was great diversity in the manner and circumstances of turning out the schoolmaster. To give the reader a just conception of what is now, I suppose, a lost institution, I will relate a case that occurred under my notice. The school was large, and many of the scholars had reached manhood. plan of the expulsion was duly considered and carefully laid. At the appointed hour, the pupils all being in the school-room, and the master being without, the door was shut and duly barricaded. He soon approached and demanded admission. The demand was refused, except on condition that he should give the required holiday. Unfortunately for the garrison, the teacher, having the key, was master of the situation. immediately locked the door, put the key in his pocket, gave notice that he would open the school at the usual hour the next morning, and walked away as if he were going home. manœuvre frightened the children. The prospect of being kept from their homes all night caused them to cry piteously. The leaders of the enterprise had been fairly caught in their own trap. They were prisoners, and left to suffer the consequences of their indiscretion. In the extremity a council was called and a method of escape was adopted. Benches, chairs, tables, and whatever else would answer the purpose, were heaped together in the centre of the room, making an elevated platform. On this stood a tall, slender, gawky young man,

who, by lifting up his long arms, could reach the roof of the school-house. Without much difficulty the loosely-laid boards were opened wide enough to admit the egress of the hero. It was not an easy feat to perform. Reaching, however, with his extended arms the aperture, and seizing with his hands the boards on each side of it, by a vigorous effort he elevated his head slightly above the roof. At this moment, the master, having watched the proceedings within, returned to the combat. Having a long pole, with its brush upon it, he brought it down with a sweep on the head of the escaping prisoner, compelling him to draw it under the roof for safety. It would be tedious and unnecessary to relate how the leader became desperate, had a finger-nail knocked off, used language that ill befitted his lips, and which it is to be hoped he never repeated, made his escape from his confinement, seized the master, had a personal struggle, in which he was thrown to the earth, but finally succeeded in securing a holiday, which the master was quite as anxious to grant as the school was to receive.

Of the history of this custom I have no knowledge. When, where, or how it originated, or to what extent it prevailed, I cannot even conjecture. It was a foolish practice. The better class of teachers and the more intelligent patrons of the schools disapproved it and sought to prevent it; but it had descended from a past generation, and was strongly entrenched in the views, tastes, and traditions of the people.

Another custom, common in that day and region, deserves notice. It was called "school-butter." The term was expressive of ridicule and contempt. A daring boy or young man, in passing a school, would cry, at the top of his voice, "School-butter! school-butter!" and repeat the word as long as his voice could be heard by the school. The insult could not be endured for a moment. Instantly books, slates, everything—with the consent, or at least connivance, of the teacher—were thrown aside, and all the boys of an age to avenge the insult started in pursuit of the offender. If he was on a fleet horse, and duly aware of his peril, he might easily make his

escape; but if he was on foot, or loitered in his way, he was quite likely to be arrested. The enraged boys pursued him on nimble feet, with untiring perseverance, availing themselves of every nigh way-running through fields, climbing fences, and seeking at every lane and defile and turn in the road to head and capture the offender. They would continue their pursuit for miles and hours, and never abandon it until all hope of his arrest was gone. Woe to the unlucky wight who, with the guilt of crying "School-butter!" fresh upon his head, was caught by the insulted and enraged boys. No pack of hungry hounds ever more fiercely attacked a wounded stag at bay than did the infuriated lads pounce upon the hapless insulter of their school. He was in rough hands, and his judges, who both made and executed the law, were far from being either cool or considerate. His punishment might be greatly modified by his confessions, entreaties, and promises of future good behavior, and by the lenity of the leading boys engaged in the affair; but punishment, more or less severe, was inevitable. The usual mode of its infliction was by compelling the criminal to run the "gauntlet," as it was called, without lexicographical authority. The boys, armed with well-selected rods cut from the forest, arranged themselves in two lines, facing each other, separated by a short space. The culprit was required to run between these lines, and each boy was expected to inflict on him a well-directed blow as he passed. We may fairly suppose that, in the excitement, the rods were used with little forbearance. It was a hard way for the transgressor, but to refuse to travel it was to subject himself to still harder usage. He would probably have to endure a scourging preparatory to running the gauntlet.

The origin of the custom of "school-butter," like that of turning out the master, was concealed in the dim ages of the past. No tradition told whence or how it came. It was a senseless sport; but whether the reckless lad who uttered the insulting word, or the indignant scholars who wearied themselves and wasted their time in the usually fruitless effort to punish the offense, acted with greater folly, it is not easy to

decide. It furnished another proof of the difficulty of uprooting a custom, however foolish and troublesome, which can boast of age and popular favor, and is in harmony with the romantic, adventurous spirit of boyhood.

The schools of all ages and all countries have had their recreations and frolics. Those of the Bedford schools, in the early years of the century, were such as were suited to the tastes and manners of a plain, hardy, rural population, differing in form and methods, but not in spirit and aim, from those common in other times and in other places. Who from the verge of life does not sometimes desire to live over again the days of childhood and youth, and to share in their glee and sports and idle hopes? This wish cannot be gratified. The order of Divine providence is that the old shall guide, restrain, uphold, encourage, and train for usefulness the young; and the young, in their inexperience and dangers, shall trust, reverence, and obey the old. Blessed are the old who, with the experience of years, retain the freshness, vivacity, and hopefulness of youth; and blessed are the young who, amid the fascinations and delusions of early life, seek the guidance of that wisdom which only age can give.

## THE STATE OF SOCIETY.

THE state of society in my native county, in the days of my boyhood, did not differ materially, I presume, from that of the Piedmont region, or, indeed, of the rural districts generally. The people were plain, and mostly industrious and honest. Their notorious vices were drunkenness and fighting. In that day the use of strong drink was universal, or limited only by the ability to obtain it. Many of the farmers had large orchards, and made brandy for their own use and for that of their neighbors. As there was no tax on the distillation of spirits, almost every neighborhood had its distillery for the manufacture of whiskey. At every place of public resort store, blacksmith's shop, or mill—the liquid was freely offered for sale, and everywhere found a ready market. Most families kept it in their "case," and all, from the hoary-headed father to the little child, partook daily of the morning "dram" and the noontide "grog" or "toddy." Families too poor to indulge in its daily use would drink it freely on holiday and festive occasions. At musters, courts, "corn-shuckings" and "log-rollings," all drank, at their own expense or that of their friends. It is not surprising, where drinking was universal, that drunkenness was common. It is proper to remark, however, that the excess was occasional rather than habitual. There were many drunkards, but few sots. Men were preserved from habitual inebriety partly from a motive of economy, and partly from the incessant demands of their business. On muster-days and court-days the frequency of drunkenness stripped it, in a great measure, of its shame and reproach; but at other times and on other occasions it was more disreputable. It must be said, in honor of the society, that the vice was almost unknown among females. Many of the old women smoked their pipes, and women of all ages drank, constantly

or occasionally, toddy; but not until I had passed my majority and left the county of my nativity did my eyes behold that monstrous sight—a drunken woman.

As already stated, "fighting" was a prevalent vice in the community. When men got at variance they settled their controversies, not in the genteel and refined method of blowing out one another's brains with powder and ball, but by furious quarrelling, too often accompanied by revolting profanity, ending in a regular game of fisticuffs. The combat brought no disgrace on the pugilists; and though they were sometimes "parted" by their friends, they were usually permitted, with what was called "fair play," to continue the fight until the one having the least strength or the least "pluck" was constrained to cry, "Enough!" Every blow struck after that sign of surrender was deemed cowardly and mean. Rarely a muster passed without one or more fights. A half dozen on courtday was deemed a very moderate number, and sometimes the excitement and the combats would become what was termed a "battle royal."

It is not strange that a vice so common and so popular should have developed professional fighters. They were known as "bullies." Men of great muscle, courage, and power of endurance gained for themselves a renown resembling that of the knight-errants of old by their pugilistic exploits. They were viewed by the vulgar crowd as men of great distinction. They very naturally became haughty, insolent, and defiant, awakening fear among all the feebler combatants, and contempt in all persons of refinement and virtue. They strutted on the muster-fields and court-greens, conscious of their physical superiority and their acknowledged prowess.

It may assist the reader to form a juster estimate of the times by stating an event, as we heard it in our boyhood, in the life of a celebrated bully. It occurred at a roadside tavern. A dispute arose between him and a Kentucky traveller. The rowdy was tall and muscular, weighing two hundred pounds, and in full training for single combat. The Kentuckian was a small, well formed, and agile man, of perfect self-possession.

From some difference of views the Bedford hero was induced to use insulting language to the traveller, who coolly stated that if the language were repeated he would chastise the offender. Of course such a threat was not to be endured. A fight ensued, in which the bully was thoroughly whipped and humbled. The best of the story is, that he never again attempted to distinguish himself in the game of fisticuffs.

It will not seem surprising that a vice so common and so glorious among men should have found imitators among boys. Fighting might almost have been classed among the amusements of some of the schools. To endure an insult was contrary to the ethical code of the boys. They might be restrained by natural timidity, parental authority, or the dread of an unequal conflict from resenting an offense or an injury; but lex talionis was the law of boyhood. Few boys of that day reached manhood without fighting, and many of them had more combats than they had fingers and toes. These impotent conflicts were usually attended with very little harm. scratched face or a bitten finger was ordinarily the worst result of these juvenile pugilisms. The boys deemed it prudent not to allow any serious injury to be inflicted in these combats, lest they should become implicated in the guilt, and the rod should be substituted for the fist.

The amusements were such as corresponded with the times and the people. Dancing was not a common, but an occasional and holiday exercise. It was rarely practiced without special preparation, and then its devotees aimed to indemnify themselves for its infrequency by excessive indulgence. They danced till the exercise became a weariness and nature imperatively demanded its needed repose. The plays in which the sexes united were blindman's buff, thimble, whiffling-pin, and many others whose names I have forgotten, and which, if I could mention, would convey no definite conceptions to the mind of the reader.

The sports in which men took part were mostly athletic. Hunting was a favorite exercise of many, both young and old. Squirrels, hares, partridges, ducks, wild turkeys, opossums, foxes, raccoons, deer, and bears were all hunted by sportsmen. The game, on the whole, was not worth the powder, but it created excitement, which was no little valued by the population of a quiet, rural district. Hounds, traps, and guns—both smooth and rifled—were put in requisition for the sport.

In hunting and shooting I was undistinguished. The first time I was trusted with a gun I came upon a squirrel standing in a path a few steps from me, nibbling an ear of corn which he had feloniously taken from a contiguous field. I was seized with an instant tremor. After hasty consideration my plan of assault was laid. I ran at the thief to drive him up a tree, and succeeded admirably. He climbed a tall oak, thickly covered with boughs, and I saw him no more. It was fully six months before it occurred to me that I might have shot him on the ground. My subsequent success in sportsmanship fully corresponded with this unpromising commencement. I could never kill anything, either running or on the wing. I could take aim as accurately, or fire as quickly, as any marksman; but if I fired, I did not take aim; and if I took aim, I did not fire. In either case, the game was unharmed. If slaughtered animals were permitted to indict their relentless pursuers, few of all the Bedford boys would be freer from blame than I, provided that guilt be graduated, not by the intent, but by the execution.

Shooting, especially with a rifle, was much practiced, and carried to high perfection. To be called a "marksman" was no mean distinction. The guns used in those days cannot be compared with those which science and skill have forged in the present time for range and execution; but many of the Bedford marksmen, were they living and in their glory, might safely compete, within the range of their guns, for prizes with riflemen whose exploits have filled the world with their renown. This attainment became a serious temptation to the Bedford sportsmen. Shooting matches were common throughout the region. If a man had a bullock, or horse, or gun, or any other article for sale, he would set it up, as the phrase was, "to be shot for." A price was placed on the article, the sum

was equally divided among the contestants, and the best marksman carried off the prize. The practice was attended with the usual evils of gaming, but it cultivated to the highest excellence the art of gunnery.

Running, jumping, wrestling, and the like were sports common among men of mature age, as well as among boys. They were innocent recreations, well suited to exercise and strengthen the muscles of men accustomed to toil and hardships. I may mention a fact, in passing, for the consideration of physiologists. At the opening of the late war I addressed a company of Bedford mountaineers, whose habits did not differ widely from those of the men I have described. I congratulated them on their ability to endure the fatigues and privations of war. Subsequent observations and trustworthy statistics convinced me that the clerks and mechanics of the cities bore the exposures and hardships of military service better than the rough sons of toil from the country. How was that?

One point I must not overlook. I have seen what appeared to be truthful statistics demonstrating that, with the progress of popular education and the arts of civilization, offenses against persons are diminished and those against property are increased. In the days of my boyhood, and in the region of my nativity, locks were almost unknown. Some persons locked their "meat-houses," but their cribs, barns, and stables, and even their dwellings, were defended by no such useless contrivance, and yet robbery was a rare offense. Whether in these days of public schools and advanced civilization locks are found to be unnecessary, I know not. It is probable they are not. Fighting is a great evil. It indicates a low grade of civilization; but between bullies and thieves, we unhesitatingly give the preference to the former. Bullies are governed by false views of life and duty, but they may have within them the elements of which heroes are made. Thieves, cheats, and persons who contract debts without the purpose of paying them are unmitigated scoundrels, not possessing a single trait of nobility. We say not these things to disparage education, but that a just estimate of its advantages and dangers may be formed.

## THE STATE OF SOCIETY.

THE religious privileges of the people were few, and not of the first quality. They of the first quality. They were divided in their opinions and preferences between the Presbyterian, Methodist, and Baptist denominations. Their houses of worship, with scarcely an exception, were either built of logs or framed, without plastering, ceiling, or stoves, fitted merely as shelters from sun and rain. In the winter seasons preaching was kept up chiefly in private dwellings. Religious services were conducted monthly, or at greater or shorter intervals, but in no case weekly. Most persons provided with conveyances could, within a radius of six or eight miles, conveniently attend worship every Lord's-day, conducted by one or another of the prevalent denominations. Sunday-schools were unknown. They existed in older and more advanced communities; but if the rumor of their existence had reached Bedford, I do not remember it. Meetings for social prayer were rarely held. I have no recollection of attending one until I had reached maturity, and that was a notable failure.

The preaching of the day was evangelical. It might be confused in arrangement, meagre in thought, obscure, ungrammatical and coarse in style, and vociferous and awkward in delivery; but, with few exceptions, it disclosed, with more or less distinctness and force, the atonement of Christ and the necessity of regeneration. It was remarkable for its experimental character. Most sermons contained an account of the conversions, conflicts, sorrows, and perplexities of a soul in its passage from death to life, somewhat after the manner of Christian in the Pilgrim's Progress. There was little variety in the preaching. Many sermons began with the fall of man, touched on the principal doctrines of revelation, gave a Christian's experience, conducted him safely to heaven, and wound

up with 'the resurrection of the dead, the general judgment, the retribution of eternity, and an application of the subject according as "light and liberty" were granted. These discourses were generally an hour and a half, and sometimes three hours in length. A few were of moderate length, and delivered in better taste.

Many of the preachers "spiritualized" their texts; that is, they would take plain, historical passages of Scripture, and, by fanciful resemblances, draw from them lessons of which their authors never dreamed. The Songs of Solomon were an inexhaustible source of texts for the allegorizers. There was scarcely a verse in the book which they did not torture into pious absurdity. Some of these mystifiers found the matter for a tedious sermon in a single word. A godly, worthy, and highly esteemed preacher took for his text: "Wherefore, gird up the loins of your mind," &c. He based his discourse on the word "loins," which he confounded with the word lines. There were various kinds of lines—lines by which carpenters executed their work—lines for the division of lands—lines of stages for travellers-lines for guiding unruly teams-and in all these uses of the word he found a mystical import, which he unfolded to the delight and for the edification of his hearers. Other preachers went still further, and found a spiritual import in every letter of the Bible. A pious minister declared that he believed that not only every text, but every letter, and every crook and dot in every letter, had a spiritual meaning. His trouble was, that he could not discern all these mysteries. I will give a brief outline of a discourse of one of these spiritualizers. His text was: "Salvation is of the Lord." To him it seemed that there was something mystical in every letter of the word Salvation. He proceeded to evolve its mysteries. "S," said he, "saving salvation [not very luminous]; A, almighty salvation; L, lasting salvation; V, vast salvation; Athis A, my brethren, signifies the same as the other A; T, eternal salvation The was probably a better divine than orthographer]; I, incomprehensible salvation; ON-we will take both these letters together—honorable salvation."

preacher had now a broad foundation for his sermon, on which he built leisurely and for an hour or two.

It must be conceded that these are the poorest specimens of the allegorical style of preaching. In merit, however, there was little distinction between the best and the worst, the most ingenious and the most absurd, discourses of this style. They were all drawn from an exuberant imagination, and not from the oracles of God. It is proper, too, to state that amid much that was puerile and disgusting there was frequently mingled momentous truth, illustrated by apt analogies and enforced with unaffected pathos. It should be remembered, also, that this method of expounding the Scriptures claimed high authority. It originated with, or was, at least, greatly encouraged by Origen, one of the most learned and voluminous of the early Christian Fathers. Dr. Gill, unrivalled among modern commentators for Hebraistic lore, gave no little encouragement to it. It must be noted, too, that the practice was not limited to the illiterate, but prevailed, more or less, with ministers of the highest culture and of all denominations. This remark was certainly true within the range of my juvenile observations.

There was another striking peculiarity in the preaching that I heard in my early years. It was eminently controversial. Every preacher was a polemic. Whether his text was doctrinal or practical, historical or poetical, gracious or denunciatory, he could find in it a hook on which to suspend his distinctive notions, and a club with which to defend them. If he was a Methodist, his hearers would have no doubt that he rejected predestination, believed in Christian perfection (whatever that may be), and the liability of believers to fall from grace, and, quite probably, infant baptism and the validity of the ordinance by sprinkling. Presbyterians and Baptists were quite ready to assert and defend the doctrines of election, and the certain salvation of all believers; nor were they slow to attack what they considered Arminian errors. Baptists did not then-certainly very few ministers among them did—give undue prominence to their distinctive views.

To the candid and fair discussion of doctrinal questions on which Christians differ there can be no objection. It is demanded by the love of truth and fidelity to Christ. Unfortunately, however, the religious controversies of those days were too often conducted in a bitter and abusive spirit. The aim of the contestants seemed to be, not to convince their hearers and win them to the truth, but to wound, overwhelm, and bring into contempt their opponents. Had their hearers judged of Calvinists from the representations of Methodists, they must have concluded that the believers in predestination were not only infatuated, but on the high-road to the perpetration of all manner of crimes. "It came from hell," it was said. "and would be the means of conducting multitudes thither. If it were true, God would be worse than the devil." These violent assaults were returned by Calvinists in full measure, heaped up and running over. Said a preacher, who, by the sharpness of his sascasm, had acquired the title of "The Arminian Skinner," "From fifty to a hundred souls are converted at a Methodist camp-meeting. In a little while they all fall from grace. What a disappointment! The poor souls were disappointed; the Methodists were disappointed; and God was disappointed. The only way to save Methodist converts is to cut off their heads and send them straight to heaven before they have an opportunity of falling from grace."

It must not be supposed that all preachers labored in this spirit and manner. The general tendency was to doctrinal and controversial preaching; but there were many preachers who avoided in the pulpit all acrimonious and discourteous remarks. They preached the gospel with simplicity and earnestness. Among these may be mentioned Rev. William Harris, the venerable pastor of my youth, of whom I may have occasion to speak more particularly in a future chapter.

It is questionable whether ministers of the present day are not, in danger of drifting to the opposite extreme from that of the early preachers of the century. A sickly sentimentalism is leading them, not only to avoid offensive language in the pulpit, but to efface the distinction between truth and error.

Bigotry is bad, but not so bad as religious indifference. There is a sharp conflict between truth and error, right and wrong; and God requires that his servants shall espouse and earnestly, but lovingly, maintain the teachings of his work.

I must notice another peculiarity in the preaching of those times. Much of it was uttered in a monotonous, singing tone. This tone usually indicated the higher and more impassioned parts of the discourse. There was power in it. Among a plain, uncritical people it had a wonderful mastery over the sympathies. Many of these unsophisticated preachers carried the art of intoning their sermons to the highest excellence. There were most touching melody and pathos in their voices. Rev. Andrew Broaddus, of Caroline, one of the most polished speakers I have ever heard, would occasionally, in the highest strains of his enrapturing eloquence, glide into the "holy tone" with thrilling effect. The tones of the voice have much to do with the influence of all kinds of public speaking. It is supposed by some Hellenists that Demosthenes delivered his splendid orations in tones resembling those adopted by the old preachers. Certain it is, many plain people value sermons more on account of the intonations in their delivery than the thoughts they convey. In confirmation of this remark, I had a striking instance in my own experience. Many years ago, an artless stranger, whom I casually met, said to me: "I hear you preach every Sunday. You are the greatest preacher I ever did hear." "Ah!" said I, "you have not, I suppose, heard Mr. M. preach." At that time Mr. M. was attracting great attention by his sermons. "Yes," he replied, "I have heard Mr. M. several times. He is a great preacher; but he is not so great a preacher as you are. You have most the mournfulest voice of any man I ever did hear." It was evident that not my thoughts or style, but the modulation of my voice, though I had not attained to the holy art of "intoning," had won the admiration of my strange hearer.

## NOTABLE MINISTERS.

RESIDING, during my early years, in obscure and unfrequented portions of the country, I knew, of course, not many ministers distinguished for their abilities, labors, or position in life. I saw, however, a few who by their gifts or eccentricities had acquired notoriety, and of whom I retain a somewhat vivid recollection. Among them I may mention Lorenzo Dow. I take the following account of him from the Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge:

"He was one of the most remarkable men of his age for his zeal and labors in the cause of religion. He was a native of Coventry, Connecticut, and in early life became deeply impressed by the truths of religion, and felt urged by motives irresistible to devote his life to the preaching of the gospel in various parts of the world. His eccentric dress and style of preaching attracted great attention, while his shrewdness and quick discernment of character gave him no inconsiderable influence over the multitudes that attended on his ministry. He travelled extensively in England and Ireland, and repeatedly visited every portion of the United States. He had been a public preacher for more than thirty years, and it is probable that more persons have heard the gospel from his lips than from those of any other individual since the days of Whitefield. He wrote several books, particularly a history of his own life, so singularly eventful and full of vicissitudes. His purity of purpose, and integrity and benevolence of character, can hardly be questioned. He was a Methodist in principle, and, though not in connection with that society, was held in esteem by many of that body. He died in Georgetown, D. C., February 2. 1834."

In my boyhood, about the year 1813, I attended a Methodist camp-meeting in Botetourt, now Roanoke county, near the

Big Lick. Dow was present. The desire to see and hear him was as great as if he had been an inspired apostle. He kept himself closely concealed until the hour for his occupation of the stage. His appearance was extremely *outre*. He was past midlife, rather above the ordinary stature; his hair was long and hung loosely over his shoulders, and his dress was according to no fashion of which I had knowledge, either modern or ancient. His text—if text he took, and if my memory is not at fault—was: "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." I was too young to form any opinion of the merit of the sermon. I saw Lorenzo Dow, and that was no unimportant event in the life of an obscure country lad. I remember nought of the sermon except that it condemned in strong terms persons who employed false measures in trade.

I never saw Dow afterwards; but the country abounded in stories of his eccentricities. One or two of them I will record. He preached in the county of Bedford some years before I saw him. Looking over his large congregation, he said, in a solemn manner: "A person on my right hand will die in a few months," or words of similar import. The prediction was quite within the range of probability, but many deemed it oracular. A lady of the neighborhood, wealthy and respected, appropriated the prophecy to herself, went home, took to her bed, and was soon buried.

Dow, as I afterwards learned, gave notice that he would preach at an old colonial church in Nansemond county, or somewhere in that region, one year from the publication of the notice. At the appointed time a great crowd assembled. Dow had not been heard from, and none knew where he was. While all were in expectation and doubt, a noise was heard in the contiguous grove. The preacher had arrived, ascended a bended tree, posted himself among its branches, and commenced religious services. Soon the congregation vacated the church and assembled around the eccentric preacher in the grove.

I will give a current story of Dow, of the truth of which I

have no proof. It has verisimilitude. It is more likely to be true of him than of any other minister of whom I have had any knowledge. It is said that Dow, on his way to an appointment for preaching, fell in with a man that complained that his axe had been stolen. After learning the facts of the case the preacher promised the stranger that he would endeavor to recover the axe. On ascending the pulpit he remarked that an axe had been stolen in the neighborhood, and that the thief was in the congregation, and drawing a stone from his pocket, he lifted his hand, with vehemence of manner, as if he were in the act of throwing the stone, and said: "I will knock him down with this stone." The thief dodged, and Dow, pointing to him, said: "That is the man who stole the axe."

In my boyhood I saw another man who, if less gifted and less distinguished than Dow, was certainly not less eccentric. This was Jeremiah Minter. He was a tall, spare man, probably sixty years old when I saw him. His residence, I think, was in Mecklenburg county, Va. He was an independent, itinerating evangelist—probably an imitator of Dow. He had been a Methodist, but, either from choice or necessity, had been dissevered from that communion. He wrote and published several small volumes, which he sold, probably for his support, in his religious ramblings. He interpreted Matthew xix: 12 literally, and showed his faith by his works. His error can scarcely be considered so strange as it is that the same operation should be performed to secure for the Pope's choir in Rome fine alto voices. It made Minter, however, an object of curiosity and wonder, and caused him to be viewed with mingled emotions of contempt and amazement.

Whether he was a monomaniac I am not qualified to say. His appearance, manners, and conversation, so far as I can remember them, furnished no proof of his insanity. A statement contained in one of his books seemed to evince that he was laboring under a hallucination. In one of his journeys among the Alleghany mountains he affirms, with great confidence, that he saw the ghost of Bishop Asbury (I think that is the name), and that he was in torment. He appeared in an

old field, on the road side, in the form of a white horse. That Minter saw the horse is quite likely, but how he identified him with the good bishop, so far as I can recollect, he does not state. If the white horse was really a spirit from the invisible world, it might be more reasonably inferred from his color that he was "an angel of light" than a lost spirit from the region of "the blackness of darkness." In all ages and among all peoples white has been the symbol of purity, and black of guilt and error.

I must refer briefly to another eminent minister whom I saw in my youth—the Rev. Conrad Speece. He differed widely from Minter and Dow. He was a Presbyterian minister, residing in his latter years in Augusta county, Va. At one time he united with a Baptist church, but in a short while, from some dissatisfaction or change in his views, he returned to the Presbyterian communion. I heard him preach in a grove near Hardy's Mill, in Bedford county, when my mind was quite too immature to form an intelligent judgment of his sermon. In person he was large, muscular, having more the appearance of a blacksmith than a preacher. His manner of speaking was very different from that to which I had been accustomed. It had nothing of "the holy tone," the ranting, and the vehemence then so common in sermons, but was natural, simple, and conversational. His sermon, as well as I can remember it, was a discussion of the character and labors of the apostle Paul. To me it seemed tame, but better judges than I was pronounced it an admirable specimen of pulpit eloquence.

In the year 1832 (or about that time) I saw Dr. Speece again, at a memorable temperance convention held in Charlottesville, Va. It was attended by many distinguished men from this and other States. The Temperance Reformation was then in its noontide glory. The wine question was just beginning to divide and agitate its friends. Measures were proposed and remarks were made regarding the use of wine which the Doctor thought extreme and contrary to the teaching of the Scriptures. In rising to discuss the subject, he remarked that he would "take the bull by the horns." He made a speech

which, for deliberation, clearness, logical acumen, comprehensiveness, and wisdom, I have rarely heard excelled. An opponent, in replying, charged the Doctor with taking the bull by the tail rather than by the horns. The wit caused great amusement, but it could not weaken the force of the Doctor's reasoning.

I remember that many years ago the venerable Dr. W. S. Plumer said that Speece was the greatest man, or one of the greatest men, whom he had known. He compared him to a heavy columbiad, under whose wide range small arms might be usefully employed. He was, undoubtedly, a man of great intellectual force.

### THE STRAWBERRY ASSOCIATION.

THIS body included, until I had reached manhood, the churches of Bedford and several adjoining counties. The first session of it which I attended met at Hatcher's meeting-house, so called from the name of my grandfather, the first pastor of the church, on whose land it was built. I cannot remember the year of this meeting; I am sure that I was then in my teens. I recollect nothing of the proceedings of the body, but call very distinctly to mind two ministers who were present.

One was Elder William Duncan. He resided in Amherst county, and was a messenger from the Albemarle Association. He was baptized in early life (I think by my grandfather), soon entered the ministry, and acquired a considerable local reputation. Taylor says of him: "He was a man of no ordinary talent and influence. He occupied a large place in the regards of his brethren of the Albemarle Association, and for a period of sixteen years in the State of Missouri. His memory is precious to the churches, and it must not be suffered to pass into forgetfulness." When I saw him he was about forty years old, tall, raw-boned, and seemingly of not a vigorous constitution. He preached from the words: "Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works." Of the sermon I remember nothing, except that it was delivered in a simple, earnest manner, without the common sing-song tone.

Another minister whom I remember was Elder John Anthony. His labors dated back to the Revolutionary time, and he was the only preacher whom I saw that had the honor of having suffered imprisonment for the cause of Christ. So far as I can recollect, no reference was made at the time to the fact

by himself or others. It was probably many years before I gained a knowledge of it. Mr. Anthony was an earnest, good man, but not a great preacher. I recollect that he preached, but can recall nothing of his sermon except the monotonous manner of its delivery. His voice sounded like the low bellowing of a bull, with very slight variations. I intend no disparagement of Elder Anthony's discourse by this comparison. There was great variety in the tunes in which the fathers sung their sermons—melodious and harsh, loud and soft, uniform and variable. The worst cases of drawling that I heard from them would compare favorably, in art and impressiveness, with a specimen of "intoning" to which I listened a few years since in a magnificent cathedral in the city of Montreal, Dominion of Canada.

The next session of the Association at which I was present met at the Suck Spring meeting-house, in the neighborhood where I was brought up. I know not the year in which it occurred. It was attended by one of the heaviest rains that I have known. Small rivulets were increased into turbulent and dangerous rivers. The whole country was deluged. Cloaks and umbrellas were of little avail, and the devotees of fashion were less concerned for the preservation of their finery than that they might safely navigate the streams that crossed their ways. At this meeting, as at the former, my attention was chiefly attracted by two ministers.

The first was Elder John King, of Henry county. He had lost a limb by amputation, and was usually called "Wooden-Leg John King." He was a native of Brunswick county, and commenced his ministry there, but early removed to Henry county. He is respectfully mentioned by Semple in his history. Taylor says of him: "He was a man of strong mind. As a preacher he was inclined to be doctrinal. He knew how to bring from the treasury of the Word things new and old." I was too young to judge soundly of his abilities, but well remember that he was considered the ablest preacher of the Association. He was greatly admired by Mr. Jesse Witt, the father of Dr. D. Witt, who possessed an excellent judgment.

I remember a remark of King, which the old man reported: "I am more afraid of John King than of all the devils in hell." He preached at the Association referred to, and, I think, the introductory sermon, from the text: "The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hand shall also finish it." He considered Zerubbabel as a type of Christ, and the temple a type of the Church; and spoke with great plainness, force, and dignity. He would, I doubt not, have commanded respect in any community where intelligence, truth, and piety were held in estimation.

The other preacher whom I remember was John W. Kelly. He was the first young minister whom I had seen. I was more impressed by his youthfulness than by his abilities. Afterward I became well acquainted with him. He was an excellent man, who labored long and hard to acquire an education. He was a good preacher, but would have preached better had he never heard that remarkable man, John Kerr, preach. He greatly admired Kerr's preaching, and showed his good taste in so doing; but, consciously or unconsciously, he became an imitator of his preaching. It was not possible for the kite to soar with the eagle. Of all the men I have known, Kelly possessed the greatest power over the risible faculties. In the pulpit and on all religious topics he was severely grave, but when in private or in public he gave indulgence to his humorous mood he convulsed his hearers with laughter. They would sometimes escape from his presence to avoid the pain of laughing. Had he been an actor he would have been as eminent in comedy as Garrick was in tragedy.

I will relate one of his stories, though it has no connection with the Association, because it illustrates the character of the man and the spirit of his times. An association (not the Strawberry) was held with one of his churches. During the meeting he and several visitors staid with a Mr. C., a wealthy planter, whose wife was a member of the church. Though several strange ministers were present, nothing would satisfy the C. family but that Kelly should preach at night at their house. After the service it became obvious to the guests that

some matter of grave importance was occupying the minds of the household. Mr. C. and his wife in one direction, and the sons and daughters in another, were engaged in earnest conversation. None could conjecture the cause of these secret, earnest conferences. Early in the morning Mrs. C. beckoned to Brother Kelly, and conducted him to a secluded shed-room. A chair had been prepared for him to be seated between the husband and wife. Kelly felt quite sure that the agitating family secret was soon to be divulged to him. Mrs. C. conducted the conversation. "Brother Kelly," said she, "you have been preaching for us a long time, and we greatly admire your preaching, but we have never given you anything. I and my husband have consulted, and decided that we ought to make you a present." There was never a time, Kelly said, when a gift could be more acceptable. He had spent all his means in acquiring an education. His wardrobe was bare and his purse was empty. His hope was high, as the family were rich, and their attachment to him marked. The old lady continued: "The times are hard and money is scarce." By these words his expectation was much abated. She proceeded slowly: "We have a good flock of sheep." Supposing that he was to receive a present in sheep, he was puzzled to know what he should do with them. She added: "As you have no sisters to knit your socks or make your clothes,"-it burst upon his mind that he was to receive a suit of homespun clothes, then generally worn in the community—a most acceptable present. She continued: "I and my old man have concluded that when shearing-time comes you shall have wool enough to knit you a pair of socks." The glowing hopes of the young preacher sank to zero. How the old sister brought the wool to church, and how Brother Kelly evaded the reception of it, and how afterwards she apologized to the favorite preacher for having used the wool, and how grateful he was to be relieved of the task of conveying it home, to provoke the amusement and call forth the jests of his young friends, it were tedious to tell; but quite sure I am that no person ever heard him relate the story without uncontrollable mirth.

#### VII.

#### TEMPERANCE.

HAVE already referred to the almost universal custom of drinking alcoholic liquors. I drank as did other boys. When I was a little over eight years old, I heard a wagon-boy, somewhat older than I, say: "I have not drunk a drop of spirit for three years." I had no acquaintance with him, but instantly resolved that I would follow his example. I cannot now remember the motive which gave birth to the resolution. I had no conviction that the use of strong drink was either sinful or dangerous, and suspect that I was influenced in my purpose more by a desire to be singular than to be safe. I made no boast, or even mention, of my resolution. The pledge was entirely mental. When spirit was afterwards offered to me, I simply declined drinking it. A course so singular soon attracted attention. My friends were surprised and troubled that I should have adopted a resolution fraught with so much peril. They were quite sure that I would become a drunkard. In confirmation of their opinion, they referred to at least half a dozen men who had abstained entirely from using strong drink, had become sots, and some of them died drunkards. I supposed I had made a dreadful mistake, and was much troubled at it; for I had great horror of becoming a drunkard. I counselled with no one on the subject, but concluded that my safest course would be to glide back, without attracting notice, into the use of strong drink. It occurred to me, however, that this might be the means of fulfilling the prediction of my friends. I was perplexed. I can never forget the pleasure which I experienced when the truth broke on my mind that if I should never drink intoxicating liquors it would be impossible for me to become a drunkard. My good resolution was confirmed. My friends were correct in their facts, but erred in their conclusion. There was a mighty factor

in the account which they entirely overlooked. The persons they named abstained from using strong drink for a time in the vain effort of breaking the habit of intoxication which they had formed by the long-continued use of strong drink. I had no such habit to break. Their reasoning was sound as it applied to persons in a condition like that of those named, and the soundness of the reasoning constitutes one of the strongest motives to abstain from the use of intoxicating drinks. It is easy to avoid forming the drunken habit, but almost impossible to break it.

I continued steadfast in my resolution until, in the twentieth year of my age, I made a profession of religion; and then, strange to say, I concluded to abandon it, on the ground that the gospel had set me free. It seemed unreasonable that I should bear a self-imposed yoke. Using strong drink appeared to be numbered among the privileges of the kingdom of heaven. All Christians enjoyed it, from my venerable and very temperate pastor down to the humblest church member; and why should not I? This delusion did not long continue with me. It is probable that I did not take half a dozen drinks, and possibly not a single drink, of intoxicating liquor before I renewed my resolution. Of this transaction my late friend, Dr. Witt, retained a more distinct recollection than I did, and shall furnish the history of it. He says:

"Some time during the summer of 1822 an event occurred which I ought not to pass over in silence, as it contributed largely to the safety and the felicity of my life. We (he and myself) were attending a meeting at Hatcher's meeting-house, and had spent the night at a brother White's, who lived in that neighborhood. In the morning, as the custom was, a decanter of spirits, with sugar and water, was set out, and we were invited to partake of it. We were in the habit of tasting, occasionally, of the insidious cup, but I do not now recollect whether on this occasion we drank or not. We were led into a conversation on the subject. We concurred in the opinion that it was not only a useless habit, but that it was fraught with pernicious consequences. We then and there, on a bright and

beautiful Sabbath morning, mutually resolved to abstain, during the remainder of our lives, from the use of intoxicating liquor as a beverage, and to use it only as a medicine, if used at all. We pledged ourselves each to the other, in a hearty shaking of hands; and that sacred pledge we have religiously kept for half a century."—Life of Witt, pp. 58, 59.

The pledge was in itself of small moment. That two lads. living in obscurity, should resolve to abstain from using intoxicating liquor as a beverage, while all their neighbors continued the practice, seemed to be unworthy of record. Tall trees grow from little acorns, and great effects flow from slight causes. That Sabbath morning pledge caused Rev. Abner W. Clopton, of Charlotte county, to abstain from using strong drink, and led on to the formation of the Virginia Temperance Society. He was unquestionably the father of the Temperance Reformation in this State. He conceived the plan of the society: called the meeting for its organization; drafted its constitution; defended its principles; prepared the eloquent address to the public which accompanied the publication of its first minutes, and for several years employed his tongue, pen, and purse for the promotion of its interests. Witt and myself were present at the organization of the society, felt a deep interest in its success, but played an unimportant part in its formation. The society was organized at Ash Camp meeting-house, Charlotte county, Va., in the autumn of 1826. Ample notice had been given of the meeting, a large and excited congregation was present, and after a full discussion of the principles and aims of the society, and earnest appeals for persons to join it, only ten could be found willing to sign the pledge, and most of these were ministers who had come from a distance to be present at the meeting. The society was, however, like a grain of mustard seed sown in a good soil. It soon sprang up and became a great tree. Clopton was indefatigable in its cultivation. a few years a temperance convention was held in Charlottesville, representing all religious denominations and many portions of the State, and containing many men of fine talents from various parts of the country. Clopton was not there, but the convention was the product of his judicious and courageous efforts.

The society had reached its culmination. It contained at its organization the elements of discord. Clopton was far from being an ultraist on the subject of Temperance. The society was composed of such persons as would pledge themselves to abstain from using strong drink, except as a medicine, and exert their influence to induce others to adopt the same course. Whether wine should be included in the pledge was warmly debated at the organization of the society. The inclusion of wine was opposed chiefly on the ground that public sentiment would not tolerate a measure so extreme. Rev. John W. Kelly, noted for his humor, was present, and opposed the including of wines or fermented liquors in the pledge. He thought the public would see the propriety of abstaining from the use of distilled liquors, but not of other alcoholic drinks. We might do something, but would fail entirely by aiming to do too much. He illustrated his views by a case of which he had knowledge. A sick man was advised to take a dose of salts, and assured that it would make him well. He concluded that if one dose would make him well, two doses would make him better, and three doses would bring him the highest perfection of health. The reasoning seemed to be sound, and the sick man took three doses at one time; but the medicine, not respecting his logic, came near killing him. He advocated the plan of giving one dose-abstinence from strong drink-at a time. Against such reasoning, and especially the storm of laughter which it provoked, the friends of extending the pledge to all intoxicating liquors (of whom I was one) were doomed to defeat. Still the seeds of discord had been sown, and they sprang up and flourished. The meetings of the society were attended with discussions, ineradicable discords and dissatisfaction, and after a few years were discontinued. The cause, however, did not expire with the dissolution of the parent society. Other organizations—the Washingtonians, the Sons of Temperance, the Good Templars, and I know not how many more—sprang up to defend and promote it. It became complicated with questions of State policy and of Church discipline, and gave rise to numerous controversies which hindered rather than promoted the temperance reformation. From being in the van, I fell into the rear of the temperance movement, without any change of my views or practice. I have continued to believe, as I believed in the beginning, that the use of intoxicating liquors, whether distilled or fermented, as a common beverage is, to persons of sound health, needless, expensive, and fraught with peril to health, morals, happiness, reputation, and salvation; and that it is wise, and safe, and commendable to avoid the indulgence. If, however, a man dissents from my opinion on the subject, and uses intoxicating drinks without drunkenness, I am not authorized by any law of God or man to condemn him.

I have wandered quite beyond the sphere of my Recollections, but deemed it proper, while on the subject of Temperance, to sketch my connection with it down to the present time. I have been assured by judicious medical friends that a cautious use of strong drink, at my period of life, would be promotive of my general health and vigor, and of my longevity; but, as I am not fully convinced of the correctness of the advice, and as my compliance with it might need explanation and defense, and my example might be perverted to evil, I use strong drink only when my health seems to render it necessary. When a man at the age of seventy-five years, under the advice of skillful physicians, uses spirits temperately for the preservation of his declining strength, his example furnishes no plea for men in the vigor of life and the fulness of health to use it for the gratification of their appetite. But there are many fools who will not see the subject in that light. reasoning lies within narrow limits: Senex drinks, and we will drink.

## VIII.

#### THE GREAT REVIVAL.

In the beginning of the century there was a considerable religious awakening in the land of my nativity. I frequently heard my seniors tell of the preachers, meetings, and converts of those times. They had been succeeded by a long-continued season of religious coldness and sterility. Local revivals of very limited influence undoubtedly occurred, but when I had reached the age of nineteen years none had come within the range of my observation. People attended religious meetings occasionally, but rather to see and hear what was passing than to be profited by the word of God. Churches were small, and composed exclusively of members who had reached or passed the meridian of life.

In the summer of 1821 there began to appear signs of an approaching religious revival. Congregations were larger, preaching was more searching and earnest, and was heard with greater attention and solemnity; tears furnished proof of more tender feeling, and prayers for the conversion of sinners were more importunate than in years past. The churches hoped for a speedy and copious ingathering of precious souls. latter part of August a meeting of several days was held at Hatcher's meeting-house. On Sunday the assembly was large. The pulpit in the grove was occupied successively and without intermission by elders John Davis, Absalom Dempsey, William Harris, and William Leftwich. Their sermons, not abridged in length, but increased in power, were heard with unabated interest to the close. The time to favor Zion-yea, the set time—had come. The ministers had preached the same doctrine to the same people, under similar circumstances, many a time without any apparent effect. Now there seemed to be a mysterious, pervasive, and subduing influence attending their ministrations. The thoughtless became attentive; the frivolous were awed into solemnity; eyes unused to weeping poured out rivers of water, and not a few persons gave utterance to sobs, sighs, and lamentations. The preaching was followed by singing, prayer, and appropriate counsels and exhortations. Many who had come for amusement remained for devotion. Gradually and slowly the congregation dispersed, some remaining till the approach of evening admonished them to depart.

At that time "protracted meetings," in the present acceptation of the phrase, were unknown. Meetings of two or three days were held, but no religious interest or prospect of usefulness suggested their longer continuance. After the awakening services referred to above, religious meetings were greatly multiplied. They were mostly held of nights at private houses, or of afternoons in arbors prepared for the purpose in forests. At these meetings the attendance was large, and solemn heed was generally given to the gospel. Inquirers were invited to kneel for prayer, and sometimes to occupy special seats for receiving private instruction. There was, I now think, a serious defect in the directions given to the anxious. They were taught the necessity of passing through a round of experiences in order to be prepared to receive Christ. Whether the excellent fathers intended to make this impression, I cannot say. Such was the result of their teaching. Awakened, troubled souls-polluted, guilty, and helpless-instead of learning that it was their duty to believe in Christ, cherished the delusion that they must come to him only as penitent or renovated sinners. They must be good before Christ could accept them; they must be healed before they could apply to the Physician. Under this mistake many burdened souls labored for weeks or months in the vain effort to make themselves worthy. In spite of the delusion, and the embarrassment and delay consequent on it, the work of conversion went on. The revival spread steadily from neighborhood to neighborhood, from church to church, and from Bedford to the contiguous counties of Franklin, Pittsylvania, Botetourt, and Campbell. Several things were notable in this revival.

It was of long continuance. Most modern revivals, dependent

on protracted meeting efforts, are transient. They resemble a hasty summer shower—refreshing while it lasts, but followed soon by drought and barrenness. This revival continued for many months—not all the time in one community, but spreading gradually, as fire in dry stubble, wafted by a gentle wind, from church to church, and from one neighborhood to another. Neither the heat of summer nor the cold of winter, the toils of autumn nor the attractions of spring, arrested its progress. Pastors, after weeks of absence, would return to their flocks to find that there had been no abatement in their religious feelings.

In a remarkable degree the revival was promoted by agents created by itself. In almost every neighborhood where it prevailed young men were called into the ministry. They were very imperfectly equipped for their work, but they labored among a plain people, whose demands for ministerial gifts were not high and whose spirit was not critical. If these young evangelists could not present a logical argument for the truth of the gospel, they believed it with all their hearts, and preached because they did believe. They were unacquainted with many scriptural doctrines, and especially with the proofs of their divinity, but they understood the way of salvation. could not contend with astute sceptics, they could guide the honest, earnest inquirer to life eternal. Their sermons were impressive, rather instructive, and were noted not for the variety, but for the importance of the truths they conveyed. They had learned the corruption of their own hearts and the fearfulness of their own guilt, and could testify from sweet experience the power and freeness of redeeming grace. They went forth to their work plainly clad, without conveyances, and some of them without a pocket Bible or a hymn-book, but with glowing zeal for the salvation of souls. Whether they had been called to the ministry, or were in the apostolic succession, were questions which did not occupy their minds. The people desired to hear something about Christ, and what these young brethren knew concerning him they were willing to tell in such language as their hearers could understand. The desire to listen to their

ministrations was general and intense, and due, doubtless, in part to the prevalence of the revival, and in part to their juvenility and the freshness of their preaching. Everywhere their visits were received with pleasure, their congregations were large, and their labors were crowned with success. They did not labor alone, but in harmony with and under the direction of the settled pastors of the churches.

The revival was distinguished for the excellence of its fruits. I have no means of estimating the number added by it to the churches. It amounted, first and last, to many hundreds, and probably several thousands. As a class, they were noted for the steadiness and consistency of their deportment, and among them were developed an unusual number of ministers distinguished for their piety, gifts, labors, and usefulness. Its fruits, however, were not all good. There were such delusions and hypocrisies as are, more or less, common in all earnest revivals. Some persons inspired hopes which they did not fulfill; but, on the other hand, quite as many proved to be better than they promised. The revival gave birth to excesses which, in some form, have accompanied most deep religious awakenings. It was quite common for persons under conviction of sin to fall, lie on the floor or ground for hours, and to exhibit the signs of deep feeling, such as tears, groans, and crying for mercy. These exercises, I am convinced, were not unavoidably; neither were they feigned. They sprang partly from an excitable temperament, and partly from an erroneous impression that they were the proper signs of true repentance. Honest but ill-informed persons cherished these bodily exercises as the best means of securing salvation. Time demonstrated that those who made the greatest show of their feelings were not always the most profitably impressed. One man, whose intense emotions and violent convulsions I heartily envied, proved to be, in after times, a most unsteady and unfruitful Christian.

This revival was specially important as forming a sort of connecting link between the old and new dispensations of the Virginia Baptists. The fathers preached without salaries, maintained themselves by their secular toils, and trained the

churches, most successfully, to give nothing for the support of the gospel. Many of them were opposed, not to learned ministers, but to the training of ministers for their work. They were unfortunately driven to these extremes by their opposition to the colonial religious establishment. As they charged the clergy with preaching from mercenary motives, they deemed it necessary to show their own disinterestedness by preaching without fee or reward. As they maintained that the clergy were men-made preachers, they aimed to demonstrate that they themselves were God-made teachers by preaching without special training for it. With all their excellent qualities and noble works, they erred on these points. These mistakes the progress of knowledge and experience was sure to correct. The new dispensation—the time of missions, Sunday-schools, and ministerial and general education—was co-etaneous with the revival above described. It was not the cause, but an important factor in the change. It would have taken place had the revival not occurred, but certainly not in precisely the same way. It gave a mighty impulse to the Baptist cause in the upper portion of the State—an impulse that was soon felt to its utmost limits—and furnished the first missionaries of the General Association.

The fathers who labored in that revival long since ceased from their labors and entered into rest. Of all the ministers called out by it, only two or three are now living. It is pleasant to consider that the cause which they loved, and for the promotion of which they labored, still lives, and, so far as it is right and pleasing to God, will live, and prosper, and finally triumph.

# MY EXPERIENCE.

"EXPERIENCE," as it was generally called, occupied a much more prominent place in sermons and in religious conversation fifty years ago than it does now. It signified that series of convictions, emotions, and conflicts intervening between the time of the awakening and the conversion of the sinner. The term might not have been well chosen, but it was well understood by those who used it. Every Christian has, and must have, an experience. Conversion is invariably preceded and accompanied by certain mental exercises, more or less intense and lasting, and these constitute an experience—a Christian experience. It is not the whole of a Christian's experience, but that part of it which is essential to constitute him a Christian. There is great diversity as well as great harmony in the experiences of Christians. They all have the same sense of guilt and depravity, the same sorrow for sin, the same despair of salvation by works, the same trust in Christ, the same feeling of deliverance from sin and guilt, and the same joyful hope of eternal life; but the order, intensity, intermingling, and continuance of these exercises vary with every true convert. I had an experience which I am willing to record for the encouragement of anxious inquirers on the subject of religion. I give it publicity with the greater pleasure because it contains nothing, except mere circumstantials, which is not common in the experience of every Christian. If I state some things that are trivial and scarcely compatible with the gravity of the theme, it is because they may afford encouragement to inquirers and assist in guiding sinners assailed by similar temptations.

I was brought up without special religious instruction. Neither my father nor my mother was a member of the church. My mother, having been trained by a pious father, had strong religious convictions, and her conversation on pious subjects, though rarely addressed to me, made an early and deep impression on my mind. From my childhood I considered religion as supremely important, and viewed all Christians with veneration. My opportunities for gaining religious knowledge were little better abroad than at home. I heard preaching not oftener, perhaps, than once a month, and much of that was of a kind not adapted to my instruction. The sermons of the time, long and tedious, were largely devoted to the fierce discussion of abstruse doctrinal points. Occasionally my sympathies would be excited by a warm, sing-song discourse.

In my boyhood I cherished the hope that, in due time, I would be converted. That it was my duty to be a Christian, was a thought which never entered my mind. The preaching that I heard made on me the impression that I must quietly wait until God's time for my conversion should come—if, indeed, it should ever come. With these views I grew up, spending the Sundays in which I had not an opportunity to hear preaching in visiting and in the amusements and sports of the times.

I remember distinctly the first prayer that I ever uttered. It was in the summer of 1819, when I was about seventeen years old. As I was plowing alone, my thoughts were suddenly arrested by the presence and majesty of God. I was overwhelmed with awe, and falling on my knees pleaded with God for mercy. Though I knew that no being but the Omniscient saw me, I, was filled with deep shame that I had attempted to pray. For days I went with a downcast countenance, not having courage to look my friends in the face, and ashamed that even God should have heard my prayers. My impressions, however, were not immediately effaced. For several weeks I carefully concealed my emotions, but continued to pray for Divine aid. In this time I became quite self-righteous. I was growing, as I supposed, very good, and looked with great compassion on my companions in their levity, guilt, and danger. In a few weeks my impressions were effaced, and my fair resolutions were abandoned. My goodness, as the morning cloud and as the early dew, passed away.

I have referred, in another chapter, to the revival which commenced in my neighborhood in the year 1821. In the early summer I attended a Sabbath service at the Suck Spring Baptist meeting-house, near my paternal residence. I did what it was unusual for me to do-remained without the house during the sermon. It was a communion season. After the congregation had partially dispersed I went into the house. The service was about closing, as usual on such an occasion, with singing a song and shaking hands. There was much warmth of feeling among the communicants. It was one of the signs of the approaching revival. At first I amused myself with a young lady of my acquaintance, who was looking gravely on the scene. Soon my own attention was arrested by it, and I burst into an irrepressible flood of tears. My mortification at this unexpected and, as it appeared to me, unseemly demonstration of feeling was intense. I left the house, concealed myself until the congregation had all left, and then rode home alone and in anxious thought. This was the commencement of my second effort to become a Christian. I betook myself to reading the Scriptures, meditation, and prayer. In a few days I attended the burial of a young man whom I had known. He was of respectable connections, but had become intemperate, and by a reckless course of dissipation had brought himself to an untimely end. As the body had been brought a considerable distance to be interred, it was deemed proper to open the coffin. I looked into it, and such a sight I have never elsewhere seen. The eyes and mouth of the corpse were stretched wide open, and neither force nor skill could close them. The unfortunate death of the young man and the horrid appearance of his ghastly face made a deep impression on my nervous system, that had been weakened by anxiety and sleeplessness. I lost all interest in society, pursued my daily labor with a heavy heart, ate my food without relish, and could not close my eyes at night without having full in my view the revolting sight of the young man in his coffin. My religious convictions and my nervous disorder were inseparable. Together they formed an intolerable burden. All nature was veiled in gloom, and my existence was a weariness. Prayer seemed to add to my distress, and my nervous excitement made my prayers a confusion and a mockery. I deliberately came to the conclusion that, to get rid of my nervous trouble, I must suppress my religious convictions, and for the present, at any rate, abandon all hope of salvation. Fresh air, exercise, society, and amusements soon restored me to health, and my restoration to a sound nervous condition found me free from all religious concern, and as frivolous, worldly, and far from God as I had ever been. If I could reach the kingdom of heaven only by the dismal road that I had been travelling, I had no wish to make the journey. Here ends the second chapter in my religious experience—if religious experience it may be called.

#### MY EXPERIENCE—Continued.

IN another chapter I have given a pretty full account of the commencement of the great revival at Hatcher's meetinghouse in August, 1821. The event was to me fraught with momentous consequences. I was slightly advanced in the twentieth year of my age, and as volatile and as full of delusive hopes as any stripling in the community. On a Saturday afternoon, at the house of a neighbor, I became acquainted with Daniel Witt, a few months my senior, but in appearance much my junior. A slight intercourse satisfied us that our views, tastes, and aims were congenial, and gave birth to a friendship and intimacy which, till the time of his death—a period of fifty years-knew no abatement, and scarcely admitted of any increase. Sunday morning we rode together to church. In all my life I had never been more volatile or more set on amusement and mischief. I need not repeat the account of the meeting, elsewhere given. Witt and myself sat together. Both became impressed about the same time, and apparently in the same degree, by such preaching as we had often heard without concern. A solemn, deep, and pervasive feeling was produced in the large assembly. The services were continued till late in the afternoon. When I raised my head and opened my eyes I was astonished to find that all the congregation, excepting a few of my friends, were gone. Even my new companion, Witt, having a dozen miles to travel to his home, had left an hour or two before.

My purpose to become a Christian was now fixed. From my very childhood I had been ambitious to excel. With me it was a settled aim never to follow if I could lead. My natural temperament had its share in shaping my resolution to become a Christian. It was not merely my purpose to enter into the kingdom of heaven, but to outstrip all my associates in the

celestial race. I engaged in the execution of my purpose in a thoroughly earnest and a thoroughly self-sufficient spirit. My subsequent course was in full harmony with my resolution. I forsook all known sins, did not indulge myself in a smile, withdrew from all society except religious, thought of nothing but my salvation, and mingled prayer with almost every waking breath. My aim was to become good enough for Christ to receive me.

My experience antedates the commencement of protracted meetings; but, in seasons of revival, meetings, especially night meetings at private houses, were greatly increased in number. I attended all those within my reach, if my engagements would permit. A short time after the memorable meeting at Hatcher's meeting-house there was an appointment for a night service in the neighborhood of my abode. There was a crowded house. Of the sermon I recollect nothing. At the close of it the minister said: "If any one present desires prayer, let him manifest it, and I will pray for him." It was the first time I had ever heard such a proposal made. Had he requested those who desired prayer to rise, kneel, or occupy a particular seat, I should have had no difficulty in complying with the request, for I did most fervently desire that prayer should be offered for me, and I was not ashamed to acknowledge it. The preacher, however, asked that any one wishing prayer should manifest his wish. I could think of but one way of manifesting it, and that was by publicly requesting him to pray for me. It was a fearful task. I was unused to speaking in public, and was in the presence of my companions, among whom I had been a leader in amusements and in mischief. How could I ask for prayer? It was an urgent case. My soul was in peril. In all my life I have never had a greater conflict between a sense of duty and a feeling of timidity. The struggle was short. In a few moments I said distinctly: "Pray for me!" I have said many things since which I have had cause to regret, but I have never been sorry that I made that request. The minister, after a slight delay, said: "Is there only one sinner in the congregation who desires prayer?" Instantly, and as by a common

impulse, the assembly rushed around the spot where I was sitting, fell on their knees, and broke forth into sobs and lamentations.

At once I was assailed by a most painful temptation. I had alone gone through the fierce conflict of asking for prayer, and now its benefits were to be divided between so many that I should derive but small advantage from it. I was sadly out of humor. My heart, that had been tender, instantly became hard and resentful. My tears that had flowed copiously were arrested, and I was utterly unfitted for the solemn service in which I was engaged. I left the house with far less hope of salvation than I had when I entered it.

A few weeks later another night meeting was appointed at the same place. I resolved, if possible, to be ready for conversion by that time. In view of the period that I had been seeking deliverance from my sins, the many prayers I had offered, the many tears I had shed, and my undeviating diligence in efforts to secure my salvation, I concluded that the hour of my conversion must be near. I attended the meeting with high hope, almost confident that I should find relief; but I was doomed to a sore disappointment. The meeting was crowded, and the religious excitement was intense. the inquirers was a rough, uncouth, and ignorant lad, named Bill Carter. Occupying a prominent position, he opened wide his mouth and roared like a lion. The scene was indescribably ludicrous, and, in spite of the solemnity of the occasion and my deep concern for my salvation, I burst into an uncontrollable fit of laughter. I quickly left the room, retired to a private place in the yard, and prostrated myself on the earth, fearing that I had committed the unpardonable sin. I meditated on my lost condition and my unaccountable levity, and my solemn feelings returned. I confessed my sin, prayed, wept, and resolved to be more watchful against levity. As I was beginning to think my condition more hopeful, the image of Bill Carter, with his mouth spread and his cries deafening the congregation, rose before my mind, and the ludicrous scene again upset my gravity, and I laughed long and convulsively.

I left the meeting, at which I had hoped to be converted, with an alarming apprehension that my day of grace had passed.

I was becoming acquainted with my own heart and my guilt before God. In the beginning of my religious exercises my heart was quite tender. I felt deeply and wept frequently and profusely. Soon, however, my heart seemed to grow as cold as ice and as hard as flint. Nothing was capable of moving it. I desired to weep, because I confounded weeping and repentance. To move my heart and draw forth my tears, I meditated on the purity, majesty, and goodness of God, the evil of sin, the solemnity of death, the terribleness of a future judgment, the joys of heaven, the woes of perdition, and the sufferings of the Son of God; but none of these things moved me. Nor was this all. I found in my heart evils of whose existence I had not dreamed. I discovered truly that it was deceitful above all things. Deceit mingled with my confessions of sin, my prayers, and my tears. I could not get rid of it. It haunted me like a ghost. I seemed to be aiming to deceive not only my fellow-men, but God. I drew nigh to him with my mouth, and honored him with my lips, while my heart was far from him. I offered him sacrifices which I knew he would not and could not receive.

Nor was this the worst. In spite of all my efforts to prevent it, the most corrupt and blasphemous thoughts would nestle in my bosom. They were such as I had no recollection of having had before, such as I dared not to reveal to my most intimate friend, and such as could find a lodgment only in a depraved heart. These evil thoughts, sad to say, haunted me most when I attempted to pray, or to read and study the word of God. The proofs of my depravity cured me of my self-righteousness. I despaired of salvation by my own works. Indeed, after weeks of anxiety, watchfulness, prayer, and mourning, I seemed to be much farther from salvation than I was at the first. All hope of making myself worthy for Christ to receive me died within me.

About this time, hearing of the conversion of a young female friend, who was awakened some weeks after I was, it seemed a

reasonable conclusion that I had missed the road to heaven. The farther I travelled the more gloomy seemed to be the prospect of reaching the end of my journey. My ambitious purpose of outstripping my companions in the celestial race was not only abandoned, but remembered with shame. Whoever would might enter into the kingdom: if I could only be the least and the last to enter it, I should enjoy a privilege infinitely beyond my merit, and have cause for unspeakable and everlasting gratitude.

## MY EXPERIENCE.—Continued.

A BOUT two months after the memorable meeting at Hatcher's meeting-house I attended a night meeting in a private house near the same place. My recollections of the meeting are limited entirely to my own exercises. A song was sung, which I do not remember to have heard before or since. It was poor poetry, and, no doubt, poorly sung, but it made an indelible impression on my mind. I can remember but a part of a single stanza. It is this:

"Come, all you tender-hearted Christians, Oh, come and help me for to mourn, To see the Son of God a-bleeding, And his precious body torn."

The words arrested my attention and turned my mind into a new train of thought. Is it possible, I inquired, that the Son of God suffered and died for such a corrupt and guilty creature as I am? The grace appeared too great. I was utterly undeserving such favor. It seemed a pity that so great a sinner as I should be the recipient of so rich a blessing. While I meditated on the subject, my heart, long cold and insensible, was dissolved in unfeigned sorrow—sorrow that I had sinned against Christ, so great, so good, and so condescending—and my eyes, for weeks unused to weeping, became fountains of tears. I had no further controversy with God. He was infinitely wise, pure, and kind, and worthy of my supreme confidence, reverence, and love. His law was holy, just, and good, and should be obeyed by every intelligent creature. Sin was a wrong, a folly, and a mischief, calling for sorrow and reformation.

One point was settled—so far as aught could be settled by a frail creature like myself—I would sin no more, if watchfulness, prayer, and an earnest purpose could preserve me from sinning.

Whether I should be saved was doubtful; but if my fearful doom were sealed, I would endeavor not to aggravate it by multiplying my transgressions and augmenting my guilt. If I should be saved, through God's infinite mercy, of all the race that fell or all the heavenly host, I should have the greatest cause for gratitude and praise. I left the meeting in a very different state of mind from that in which I entered it. I did not suppose that I was converted—I feared that I should never be—but there was sweetness in my tears, and my sorrows were soothing and led me to suppose that my condition was not absolutely hopeless.

Two or three days after this time I attended a night meeting fifteen or twenty miles from my home, at the foot of the southern slope of the Blue Ridge, near the point at which it is now crossed by the Virginia and Tennessee railroad. Of this meeting, as of the preceding, I remember nothing but what occurred in my own breast. The preaching, the praying, and the singing were all doubtless good, but my thoughts were concentrated on my own unfortunate condition. As instructed by one of my religious guides, the Rev. William Leftwich, I had often attempted to adopt the words of the father of the demoniac child: "Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief." I dared not utter the words. I feared that it would be hypocrisy, and augment my guilt, if I should repeat them. I would hardly speak extravagantly if I should say that I made a thousand unsuccessful attempts to utter them. The sentence invariably changed in my lips to, "Lord, I would believe; help thou my unbelief." On this night, in the midst of the religious services, but entirely independent of them, it seemed to me that I could heartily adopt the language of the afflicted father. Mentally I called over the words: "Lord, I believe," &c. Instantly my conscience smote me. I feared that I did not believe, and my words were deceitful. If that were believing, there had been no need for the long and painful conflict through which I had passed. I might as well and as easily have believed at first. This certainly was not the kind of faith which I had been expecting and endeavoring to exercise. After all my doubts and

reasoning, the impression came over me that I did believe, and I repeated the words with emphasis: "Lord, I do believe; help thou my unbelief." The burden of guilt and anxiety which I had borne so long instantly departed. My mind was in a calm, pleasing frame, which to me was inexplicable, and which I was not careful to analyze.

For several months my sleep had been disturbed and uncomfortable, but that night I slept as if I had been in paradise. No wave of trouble rolled across my peaceful breast. In the morning I arose early, greatly refreshed, and walked out to enjoy the balmy air and gaze on the surrounding scenery. The sun rose in cloudless splendor. Never before had he seemed so bright and beautiful. He was radiant with the uncreated glories of his Maker. His rising beams, caught first by the mountain tops, gradually descended into the valleys, clothing the autumnal forests with a golden hue. The scenery was naturally lovely and sublime; but such mountains, valleys, and forests I had never seen before. All nature seemed to proclaim the wisdom, power, and goodness of God. The mountains and the hills, the brooks and the vales, broke forth in songs of praise to their Creator, and all the trees of the forests clapped their hands for joy. Before I was aware, I had joined the rapturous anthem. My heart was overflowing with gratitude, love, and joy, and longed to give utterance to its emotions. My conscience told me that I was a poor, guilty, condemned sinner, and had no right to praise God; but my feelings triumphed over its remonstrances. Whatever might be my doom, I resolved to praise him for past mercies and that I was not then in perdition, whither I had so long deserved to be sent.

I strolled to a retired spot, at the head of a ravine, where I might engage in secret prayer. I had unanticipated freedom in the exercise. Till that hour I had never offered a petition for any being but myself. That morning I prayed for my parents, my brother and sisters, my remoter kindred, my friends, and I continued to extend the circle of my intercession until it comprehended the whole world. My prayer was a

mystery to me. I had intended to pray, as I had ever before done, simply for myself; but my feelings had borne me quite beyond the limit prescribed by my judgment.

As I was returning to the house, where I had been hospitably entertained, no little perplexed about my new, strange, and inexplicable emotions, I met Elder Harris, my venerable religious instructor, who was staying with me in the same family. He kindly inquired after my religious condition. I told him, as well as I could, the exercises of my mind, as stated above. "You are converted," said he. This was a revelation to me. I had not even suspected that I was converted. I had hoped that my exercises were favorable and might lead on to conversion, but I had not experienced such a conversion as I had heard described, or as I had been seeking. I had heard no voice, seen no light, felt no shock, and had no strange manifestation. I was willing, aye, and resolved, to forsake my sins and serve Christ; but conversion must be something more wonderful than this. Elder Harris commenced and related to me his experience. It bore a striking resemblance to my own. Of the genuineness of his conversion I had no doubt. As my exercises bore a strong likeness to his, I could but cherish the hope that I might be a subject of renewing grace. The chief difficulty I found in accepting this conclusion was in my utter unworthiness of a blessing so glorious. I cannot better express my bewilderment than in the language of one of Watts' excellent hymns:

> "When God revealed his gracious name, And changed my mournful state, My rapture seemed a pleasing dream, The grace appeared so great."

In the uncertainty of my condition, I resolved to conceal from my friends the dim and questionable hope which I had found, but the resolution was not easily carried into effect. For months my face had been covered with a cloud which no smile, except in some unguarded moment, had been permitted to brighten. To preserve the gloom of my countenance was impossible. The gratitude, hope, and joy of my heart broke out

in smiles and tears as I met the pious friends who had so long sympathized with me and prayed for me. I did not need to tell them that my burden had been removed, and that the dark night of conviction had been succeeded by the cheering dawn of hope. The tearful eye and the warm grasp of the hand told the story more eloquently than words could have done.

More than half a century has passed since I had the experience that I have imperfectly related, and the reader may desire to know my estimate of it after the studies, observations, and trials of a long life, and I will cheerfully gratify the desire. Much of my experience was circumstantial and not essential; some things which then seemed important I have learned are of little value, and some things appear now to be of greater consequence than they did then; but in its chief elements I deem it to be sound and evangelical. At any rate I would not exchange it, with the influence it has had on me, and through me on others, for all the wealth and all the honors of the world. Conviction of sin, godly sorrow, reformation, despair of salvation by works, trust in Christ, love to him, joy in the Holy Ghost—in short, an experience which comprehends the struggles of a soul in passing from death unto life—are indispensable to the existence of genuine piety and a reasonable hope of eternal life.

### MY ENTRANCE INTO THE MINISTRY.

I DO not remember when I first began to preach. In my boyhood I was accustomed to repeat, at the handles of my plow, the sermon on Monday, with all its intonations, which I had heard on Sunday. This I did, not from any special fondness for preaching, or any expectation that I should become a preacher, but merely because it was the most pleasant intellectual exercise within my reach. Having access to few books suited to interest and improve my mind, I was glad to repeat, as an amusement, such sermons as I heard.

Having made a profession of faith in Christ, I had no hesitancy in deciding on the manner of my baptism. When I was a small boy I learned that there was a controversy between Baptists and Pedobaptists concerning the mode of its administration. Just as I was learning to read in the New Testament I came to the account of the baptism of the Ethiopian treasurer, in the Acts of the Apostles. I read it with amazement. In my simplicity I supposed that it had never been discovered by the disputants on baptism. This passage, I thought, must surely end the controversy. I ran to my mother, in great excitement, saying: "Ma, the Baptists are right; I have found a place which shows that they are right." From that day to this I have never doubted that immersion was the primitive baptism. On the first Lord's-day of December, 1821, I was baptized by Elder William Harris in the north fork of Otter river, near the place of my abode. My first religious address was delivered on the bank of the stream, immediately on my emerging from it. It was impulsive, unpremeditated, and without method; but it was earnest, and impressed, by its novelty, if nothing else, my neighbors and companions. Had I been wiser, it had probably not been delivered; but, timely or untimely, it was the beginning of my ministry.

During the winter I was several times invited to speak in prayer-meetings and at the close of sermons, and I performed the service without embarrassment, and seemingly to the acceptance of my hearers.

I was called more formally to the ministry by my venerated pastor on the night of the 15th of January, 1822. A meeting had been appointed at a Mr. Lockett's, in the gorge between the Flat Top and Suck mountains. The congregation attending was small, and composed of plain, uncritical mountaineers. I had no more expectation of preaching than of a visit to the moon, when my excellent father in the gospel said to me: "You must preach to-night." I hesitated, but he insisted; and I, having boundless confidence in his piety and wisdom, consented to perform the service. After an experience in the ministry of more than half a century, I should be very reluctant now to preach without more time for preparation; but in fifteen minutes after I was called to the ministry I entered on its duties. I selected for my text II Cor. vi: 2: "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold now is the day of salvation." My sermon was about thirty minutes long, delivered with composure, without much feeling, and certainly with little method or force. I was neither elated nor depressed by it. It seemed to be such an effort as might reasonably be expected from one so illiterate and inexperienced as I was.

The next day a meeting was to be held at Mr. Palmer's, a few miles from the place of my first sermon, and in a more populous neighborhood. My reverend bishop ordered that I should preach again, which I was not loth to do. The morning I spent in earnest preparation for the service. I read the Scriptures, prayed, studied, and came to the work with a profound sense of my weakness and unworthiness. On reaching the place of preaching I found a large congregation, composed chiefly of my acquaintances and friends, and among them my mother, not then a professor of religion. I was appalled at the prospect of preaching before such an audience, but I had proceeded too far to retrace my steps. I took for my text II Cor. viii: 9: "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,

that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." No doubt I have preached many a sermon more methodical, more lucid in style, more original in thought, and less faulty in taste; but I seriously question whether I have ever delivered one better suited to interest, impress, and profit a plain audience. It was heard with unwavering attention and many tears.

The sermon was to me the occasion of a great temptation and a mortifying failure. Some of my indiscreet friends spoke to me in terms of high praise of it. They might well have spared themselves the trouble. My own heart assured me that I had preached a wonderful discourse. On this assumption I reasoned, as I judged, most logically. If from my first to my second discourse I had made such surprising progress, to what rapturous heights I must soar in my third sermon. That night there was to be a meeting at the house of the pastor, near Liberty, where I was particulary anxious to acquit myself creditably. It was decided that I should preach again, but having succeeded so well in the morning I dismissed all care on the subject, supposing that I would only have to stand up and open my mouth and thoughts and words pertinent to the occasion would flow freely.

The congregation was full, and it was arranged to have two sermons. The first was preached by Rev. P. P. Smith, of Buckingham county, a nephew of Elder Harris. I was to follow. My text was Psalm cxlvi: 8: "The Lord openeth the eyes of the blind: the Lord raiseth them that are bowed down: the Lord loveth the righteous." I stood, but my eyes were not opened; I opened my mouth, but words did not flow. I made a desperate effort to speak, and continued to babble six or eight minutes, and then took my seat in utter confusion and deep mortification. I would gladly have sunk beneath the floor, or concealed myself in an auger hole, had it been possible; but there I sat exposed to the view of all the congregation, none of whom could have had a stronger conviction of my stupidity than I had myself. My ministry, as I supposed, had come to an early and inglorious end. I had become a

wiser, if not a better man. From that hour to this I have never dreamed that religious knowledge is gained in arithmetical progression.

The next day I was again persuaded to try my gift at preaching in another neighborhood. I acceded to the request the more readily to redeem myself from the disgrace incurred by the failure of the preceding night. I was cured, at least for a time, of my self-confidence, and entered on the service with painful anxiety and trembling in every joint. My success was such as to soothe my shame for the past failure and inspire me with hope for the future.

I continued to preach from time to time, as opportunities offered, sometimes with freedom and pleasure, and not unfrequently with confusion and shame. I glided into the ministry without carefully inquiring whether I had been divinely called to it. After some months my mind became quite anxious on the subject. I feared that I had run before I was called. My call, if call I had, seemed to differ widely from that of many of the old preachers. They represented, or seemed to represent, that they had been constrained to enter the ministry sorely against their wills. The words of the apostles were often on their lips: "Necessity is laid upon me; yea, woe is unto me, if I preach not the gospel!" Unfortunately for me, as I supposed, I had a wish to preach the gospel. Of all enjoyments, preaching seemed to me to be the most desirable and the most honorable. I preferred being a preacher—poor, despised, and persecuted—to being a king or an emperor. might have found in the context of the oft-quoted scripture a corrective of my error. The apostle adds to the threatened woe of failing to preach the gospel the promised reward of preaching it cheerfully: "If I do this thing [preach the gospel] willingly, I have a reward." Neglecting to examine the passage in its connection, I missed the instruction which it contained. It was several years before my mind was entirely relieved of its doubts and anxieties by the words of Paul: "If any man desire the office of a bishop, he desireth a good work." If a desire for the episcopal office was a qualification for it, I certainly had that. I dared not affirm that my desire was free from selfish and worldly considerations, but of its sincerity and earnestness, and that it originated in scriptural views of the duties and design of the office, I had no question. From the hour that I discerned the bearing of that text on the subject I have had no more doubt of my call to the ministry than I have had of the genuineness of my piety.

# XIII.

# MY EARLY LABORS IN THE MINISTRY.

A S I glided into the ministry without design, so I pursued it for several years without any definite plan. I had no pastorate, no prescribed field of labor, no means of support, no earthly guide, no purpose concerning the future but to do good as I found opportunity, and was drifted along by the current of events. My young friend, Daniel Witt, commenced preaching in a few weeks after I did. He was a little over, and I was a little under, twenty years old. He had, however, greatly the advantage of me in appearance. He was low, slender, beardless, and of boyish appearance: I was tall, slim, gawky, and seemingly older than I really was. His educational advantages had been slightly better than mine, and he had been more favored in home opportunities for acquiring religious knowledge than I had been. Possessing a fine memory, an easy elocution, and a plaintive voice, his sermons began at once to attract attention. I can hardly err in saying that in eighteen months he became one of the most popular preachers in the State. He was not the most learned, the most profound, the most instructive, or the most impressive preacher; but, in view of his youthfulness, fluency, and pathos, none attracted larger audiences or were heard with deeper interest. He was unquestionably a more popular preacher than I, though I may be excused in saying that there were persons who judged that in originality of thought, logical acumen, and the power, under favorable circumstances, of moving the passions of an audience, I was his equal; and in this opinion, it is proper to say, he always concurred. There was no rivalry between us. He rejoiced in my success as I rejoiced in his. We were almost constantly together, and of us it might be said, as pertinently as of the primitive disciples, that we "had all things common." We had a common stock of knowledge—quite meagre; a

common sermon—which we diversified with different texts, and with fresh arguments and illustrations, as we could find them; and a common purse—which was never bloated with supplies. Dressed in homespun clothes—the common apparel of the time—with steeds neither fine nor pampered, and saddlebags containing our entire wardrobe, we commenced our humble labors.

For several months our preaching was confined to our native county, and chiefly to its southwestern border. By degrees, and as doors of usefulness were opened to us, our labors were extended into the counties of Franklin, Pittsylvania, Henry, Botetourt, Campbell, and Amherst. Everywhere we received a hearty welcome, were met by large congregations, heard with deep interest, and treated with great hospitality and kindness. Several causes contributed to augment our audiences. The revival, which commenced in Bedford, had spread, gradually but steadily, into the adjoining counties. In many neighborhoods there was a pervading interest in the subject of religion. There was a general desire to hear the gospel preached, and any minister, of any name, could draw a good congregation on any day of the week. The juvenility of Witt and myself added greatly to the attractiveness of our ministry. every place our fame, if I may use so grand a term to express our notoriety, preceded us, and lost nothing in its progress. It was represented that two Bedford plowboys had suddenly entered the ministry and were turning the world upside down. At that time and in that region young preachers were a great rarity, and excited almost as much interest as a dancing bear, and an interest of the same kind. To all these considerations I may add, as the result of my matured judgment, that the inexperienced lads preached with rather remarkable freedom, force, and fervency. Account for it as we may, few houses would hold their congregations, even on week days, and they were compelled to deliver their message in groves and under arbors prepared, in some cases, for the purpose. The night meetings were usually held in private houses, which, in most cases, could not contain the congregations. As a remarkable specimen of these meetings, I furnish an account of it from my Life of Dr. Witt, pp. 101-103:

"When Witt and myself first went into Franklin county we had an appointment to preach at the house of Mr. Aquila Divers. It was a sparsely-settled neighborhood, but the news had been widely spread that two boys from Bedford would preach. The facts, as is usual in such cases, had been greatly exaggerated. An intense curiosity to see and hear the juvenile strangers had been excited, and the people flocked from all the surrounding region to the meeting. There were probably five hundred persons in attendance. The house and yard were filled with a plain, rustic, wide-awake night congregation. Witt preached. He felt deeply the importance and responsibility of the occasion, and laid off his coat and rolled up his sleeves, as one intent on business. This may seem strange to one accustomed to the fastidiousness of the present day; but it was nothing unusual at that time and in that region. I often saw ministers of piety, age, dignity, and reputation preaching in hot weather in their shirt sleeves. I must think that the custom is more rational and defensible than many of the fashions and ceremonies which accompany the preaching of the word in the present period. Witt removed his coat, not from vanity or affectation, but for comfort and convenience. Its removal meant earnestness and labor. Nor was there any disappointment in the case. I have forgotten the text and the sermon, but the effect of the service I well remember. When the discourse was ended there were suppressed weeping and sobbing throughout the audience, in the house and in the yard. It was the commencement of a revival, not like some modern revivals, that pass away as the morning dew, but it spread far and wide, continued for months, and brought hundreds into the fold of Christ. No doubt but that to this day traces of that sermon may be seen in the county of Franklin."

Our mode of preaching, as was common at that time, was to have a series of appointments, day and night, from place to place, rarely spending more than a day in a neighborhood. We would have two sermons in the day and one at night, ordinarily alternating the service. The one who preached first in the day had usually great advantage over the other. If he had freedom in the service he reaped our whole theological field, and left but meagre gleanings for the other. In time, however, we so increased our stock of theological knowledge that the preacher of the second sermon was not much incommoded by the wide range of remarks in the first. Had the present method of conducting protracted meetings been known to us our usefulness, I judge, might have been greatly increased.

Of the fruits of our desultory labors it is impossible to make any accurate estimate. Many, I know, professed conversion under our ministry. Large additions were made to the churches by the labors of their pastors, in which the religious awakening seemed to be the result of our ministrations. I may overestimate these effects. I give the impressions of my young, ardent, inexperienced mind, which the sober judgment of age may not fully correct. Some years ago I visited a place where in my boyhood I resided and played. There were the houses, fields, hills, roads, and streams which I remembered after long years of absence; but how strangely diminished in size! A similar change might occur in the seeming importance of the events of my early ministry, were it possible for me to return to them with the judgment which time, observation, and experience have given me.

I must close this bright chapter with a gloomy tale. Soon after Witt and myself labored in Franklin and the adjoining counties the strife in the Baptist denomination concerning missions commenced. The ministers in that region generally took the anti-mission side. Many of them were good men, of narrow views and scanty information. They were apprehensive that missionary efforts would take the work of human salvation out of God's hands and transfer all its glory to men, not considering that the same objection, and with equal force, or rather inconclusiveness, might be urged against all means employed for the salvation of sinners. Most of the churches in

Franklin and Henry counties withdrew from the Strawberry Association, and organized the Pig River Association, a body most earnestly and successfully devoted to doing nothing. When Witt and myself labored in that region Baptists were numerous, with a cheering prospect before them; but under the withering influence of anti-mission, antinomian views, their progress has been greatly hindered, if indeed their number and efficiency have not been decidedly diminished.

# XIV.

#### SLAVERY.

I WAS born and brought up in the midst of slavery. Slaves were my nurses and the companions of my childhood and youth. To many of them I formed a strong and enduring attachment. Of the system of slavery my early impressions were not favorable. There were families in my neighborhood and in the regions around who, according to common report, treated their slaves with great severity. They were poorly fed, thinly clothed, hardly worked, cruelly chastised for slight or imaginary offenses, and, in some cases, murdered. These reports I fully believed, and have since seen no cause to change my opinion. This treatment of slaves was condemned by public opinion, but no measures were adopted for its correction. The blood in my young veins was made to boil by the recital of the barbarity practiced on helpless slaves, and by a few instances of cruelty which came under my notice. Nothing now prevents me from naming some of the families noted for their inhumanity to slaves, and holding them up as deserving universal scorn, but an unwillingness to wound the feelings of their descendants, who, it is to be hoped, are of a different temper from their ancestors.

I grew up with a determination never to own a slave. Whether slavery was right or wrong, was a question which I did not consider. The management of slaves was attended with so much responsibility, care, and trouble that I was resolved not to be involved in it. They could not be profitably governed without firm authority, and its exercise was uncongenial with my taste and habits.

When I grew to manhood, and removed to Eastern Virginia, I found that slaves were generally treated with greater care and lenity than in the tobacco-growing regions, where their labors were profitable. They were, with few exceptions, amply fed,

comfortably clothed, well housed, not overtaxed in labor, and duly cared for in sickness and old age. Many masters seemed fully impressed with their religious obligations to their slaves, and aimed by their instructions, example, and prayers to lead them in the way of righteousness. In not a few families the relations between the masters and their families, on the one hand, and the slaves, on the other, were exceedingly pleasant. One knew not whether more to admire the condescension and kindness of the whites, or the affection and tractableness of the negroes. While this difference in the treatment of slaves modified, in some measure, my views of slavery, it in nowise weakened my determination never to own one.

My purpose was unchanged until I became engaged to marry a lady who held slaves. By our marriage, I would become the legal owner of them. I informed her of my determination never to possess slaves, and my wish that she should get rid of hers before our marriage. She stated that her views and feelings regarding slavery were in perfect accord with my own. had inherited her slaves; they were attached to her, dependent on her for protection, and some of them for support; she did not know how to get rid of them, but would be willing, after our marriage, that I should dispose of them as I might think proper. I could ask nothing more. We were married, and I became the legal owner of slaves. What I should do with them then became a practical question. I could not free them, for the laws of the State forbade it. If they had not forbidden it, the slaves in my possession were in no condition to support themselves. It was simple cruelty to free a mother with dependent children. Observation, too, had satisfied me that the free negroes were, in general, in a worse condition than the slaves. The manumission of my slaves to remain in the State was not to be thought of. Should I send them to Liberia? Some of them were in a condition, but none of them desired, to go. If sent, they must be forced to leave their wives and children, belonging to other masters, to dwell in a strange land. Besides, to send away the men who could support themselves and aid in the support of others, and retain the women and children to

be supported by my own labors, was stretching my humanity quite beyond its power of endurance. They could not go to The same insuperable difficulties lay in the way of sending them to the North. Parents and children, husbands and wives, must be separated, and many of them sent forth to certain starvation, unless they should find charitable hands to support them. The only practicable method of getting rid of them was to sell them or give them away. Against both these methods they earnestly protested, and my heart revolted. After careful inquiry, and, I trust, an honest desire to know my duty, I came to the undoubting conclusion that it was not only allowable for me, but my solemn obligation, to hold and rule them, for their interest and for my own, as best I could. I should have been recreant to my duty and guilty of inhumanity if, under the circumstances, I had not assumed the relation of master and endeavored to meet the responsibilities arising from it.

At that beriod there was a prevalent opinion in Virginia not that slavery was in all cases sinful, but that the system imposed great responsibilities, and was fraught with many evils, economical, social, political, and moral, and should as soon as possible be abolished. The subject was earnestly and ably discussed in the Convention of 1829-'30, that revised the Constitution of Virginia. The more the matter was examined, the more insuperable seemed the obstacles to the emancipation of the slaves. About this time the abolition excitement arose in the North. Its results were precisely what might have been expected. The advocates of abolition were, with few exceptions, little informed on the subject of slavery, with narrow views and sectional prejudices, and their doubtful statements, exaggerated representations, and shallow sophistries were far better suited to awaken resentment than to produce conviction of the sinfulness of slavery in the Southern mind. The harshness and injustice of their remarks almost entirely prevented the circulation of their writings in the South. Nor was this all. Southern men discussed the subject of slavery with great clearness and ability, and their writings were read with avidity, and

in a frame of mind favorable to the acceptance of their views. The result, as already intimated, was that a marked change in public opinion on the subject of slavery took place at the South. All doubt as to the lawfulness of the institution, under existing circumstances, was banished from the public mind. Many went further still, and maintained that it was not only lawful, but eminently adapted to secure the highest intellectual and social development; and that it afforded the simplest and safest solution of the long-continued and frightful contest between capital and labor. The chief fault of the slaveholders was that, in their excitement, they became intolerant and overbearing. They would allow no dissent from their views, and forbade the discussion of a subject from whose calm and thorough investigation they had nothing to fear and much to hope.

It would have been strange if my own views on the subject of slavery had not been modified—at least enlarged—by my constant and unavoidable connection with it. Soon after the commencement of the abolition controversy, a pamphlet on the lawfulness of slavery, written by Rev. Thornton Stringfellow, D. D., of Culpeper county, Va., made its appearance. It was a plain, logical, and vigorous statement of the scriptural teaching on the subject. On reading it, I remember remarking that the Scriptures were more favorable to slavery than I had been. Up to that time I had believed that slavery in the South was allowable from the necessity of the case, and that its abolition would be fraught with more mischief than good. The pamphlet placed the subject in a new light. Moses, under certain limitations, established slavery, with divine authority, in the commonwealth of Israel. It could not have been wrong. Christ and his apostles lived and labored in countries where slavery existed under Roman law; and though they dared to proclaim the most unwelcome truths, and reprove every kind of sin, at the peril of their lives, they neither spoke nor wrote a word in condemnation of slavery. More still: They pointed out the duties of masters and slaves precisely as they did those of parents and children, husbands and wives, ruler and sub-These facts do not prove that all slavery is right, or

that it belongs to the most desirable condition of society, but simply that it may, like aristocratic, royal, and imperial forms of government, be allowable. It may, under some circumstances, belong to the best order of society that human, or even divine, wisdom can devise. Whether African slavery in the United States existed under such circumstances, is a question I do not propose to discuss; but I think it would be difficult to find a solid reason for its justification elsewhere which would not lend its full force to the vindication of American slavery.

Slavery, in this country, has been abolished by the overruling providence of God; and I sincerely rejoice in its abolition. Toward the colored race, whether in slavery or in freedom, I have ever cherished the kindest feelings. They have acted well—better than might have been expected—since their liberation. Let them enjoy their rights, and have full scope for the development of their powers and the improvement of their condition, physical, intellectual, and moral. The whites will find it as much to their interest as it is the dictate of humanity and their manifest duty to treat them not only justly, but kindly and generously. What will be the results of their sudden and violent emancipation, persons living fifty years hence will know better than we can now know.

### ODDS AND ENDS.

I RECALL some things in my early years which can be reduced to no method, and I record them, not because they are important, but for the amusement of the young and to awaken the memories of the old.

#### CHILDISH PHILOSOPHY.

From the earliest period of my recollection my mind was given, as I supposed from instinct, to speculating on the nature and causes of phenomena which I saw around me. I do not know that my thoughts on these subjects differed materially from those of other children, but I write some of them to afford an opportunity for comparison.

I early adopted a rain theory. The clouds, I supposed, were made of tin, or some similar metal, filled with water and perforated with small holes—after the manner of a watering pot, which then I had never seen; each hole was stopped with a small peg, to each peg a long string was tied, the great man of the skies held every string in his hand, and when he wished it to rain he jerked the strings, drew out the pegs, and down came the rain. The theory seemed to me to be not only plausible, but the only one that could be formed. I was as firmly convinced of its truth as is Elder John Jasper that "the sun do move." How the clouds were filled with water, or how the pegs, once drawn from them, were restored to their holes, were questions which did not enter into my juvenile philosophy.

I had quite an early and well-defined system of cosmology. The world I believed to be flat, with such inequalities as I observed on its surface; and residing in sight of the Peaks of Otter, these did not seem to be inconsiderable. I was fully convinced, by what appeared to me to be conclusive reasoning, that the earth floated on water. It must rest on something; for all my observations satisfied me that nothing could stand without a foundation. That the world was supported by water,

there were two decisive proofs. One was, that by travelling a certain distance in any direction the end of the land was reached and the water on which it floated was seen; and the other was, that by digging wells in the earth the water on which it rested was found. What supported the water was a question that never entered my juvenile brain. The intelligent reader will perceive the striking resemblance between my childish theory and the Hindoo cosmology—that the earth rests on the backs of elephants—the elephants stand on turtles—the turtles swim in water—and below the water there is mist down to the bottom.

One thing greatly surprised me. It was that my father's house had happened to be set precisely in the middle of the world. That it was, I had the most conclusive evidence. The horizon, which I conceived to be the end of the world, was equidistant from my home in every direction. I supposed that its favorable location was simply accidental, and that no other house in all the world occupied a similar position.

The most incomprehensible mystery to my boyish intellect was the shoeing of a horse. For that my philosophy could find no satisfactory explanation. I saw that a horse stood firmly on the ground with his four feet. How a shoe could be nailed on his foot, while in this position, I could not conceive. It seemed equally impossible to perform the operation from above or from beneath. I came to the deliberate conclusion that the horse's foot was cut off, the shoe nailed on, and the foot restored to its place. This theory was the best that I could devise, but it did not quite satisfy my mind. It was a mystery to me that the operation could be performed without inflicting a wound or leaving a scar on the horse.

The thoughtful reader will be struck with the fact that many of the theories, discoveries, and pretensions of the scientists and philosophers of past ages were quite as puerile as my childish speculations. It has been their chief labor in each successive generation to overthrow the theories of their predecessors. Many notions popular in past ages seem now to be ridiculous. Modern scientists claim to have passed far beyond the ancients

in their researches and discoveries. Probably they have; and yet it is not unlikely that the time may come when many of their notions, falsely called science, will be regarded as the wild conceits of distempered brains.

#### PETER BURNS.

When I was seven years old my father resided at a place called the Horse-Shoe, in the county of Montgomery (now Pulaski), as a manager for General John Preston, who is well remembered as a defaulting treasurer of Virginia. He had a teacher in his family called Peter Burns. He was an Irishman, small of stature, quite advanced in years, who had taught school in Richmond, I know not how long nor with what success. The late John Valentine, long clerk of the Second Market, knew him as a schoolmaster in this city. In the family school of General Preston my literary training was unsuccessfully commenced. I remember but a single event in my brief course of study, and that made an indelible impression on my mind.

One morning I was early in the school-room. On reaching it, I found there John, a colored boy belonging to General Preston, who was being educated with his children. Soon the teacher arrived, and it was discovered that a copy-book had been scribbled. I was asked if I knew aught about the matter, and declared, with perfect sincerity, that I did not. John, however, testified that I had scribbled the book. On the testimony of John I was convicted of the offense, against my tearful protestations. My condemnation, under the circumstances, was a folly and an outrage; but if I had been guilty, the offense was trivial. The scratching of a copy-book by a boy seven years old, just entering a school, and without any knowledge that such an act was criminal, was surely a very venial offense. It did not, however, so appear in the eyes of Mr. Burns. made me take off my jacket, and stand with my hands upon a bench before me, in a convenient position to receive a flogging. I do not think that I was much hurt, but I was frightened almost to death. So soon as I could make my escape I returned home, and never again entered the school of Peter Burns.

The trial had past, but was not forgotten. I made up my mind that if I ever grew to have sufficient strength I would chastise Peter Burns. The resolution was formed in my inmost soul, and grew with my growth and strengthened with my strength. At any time after I reached the age of seventeen years until I made a profession of religion, if I had met my tyrannical schoolmaster, neither a regard to his age, nor respect for law, nor reverence for public opinion, would have prevented me from inflicting on him personal chastisement.

Many years ago the old man ended, under I know not what circumstances, his earthly career; and I have no motive to form a harsh opinion of his conduct. Possibly he thought he was doing right, and seeking my interest, in the fright he gave me. In that case only his judgment was at fault. In so far as passion influenced his judgment, he was morally culpable. I judge him not; but I may surely avail myself of the case to make a few cautionary remarks. Great care should be taken in dealing with children. They are entitled to justice, and generally understand what it is. They do not readily forget the wrongs they suffer, nor the favors they receive. Mr. Burns might more easily have made me his friend than his foe. flagrant injustice, he inspired my heart with a burning resentment, which grace, I trust, quenched, but of which neither time nor grace has effaced the remembrance. School teachers are in great danger of acting with rashness and cruelty toward their pupils. Not a few instances—more in former than in later times—of false judgment and severity exercised by teachers toward their defenseless scholars have come to my knowledge. I protest against these outrages. Children are thoughtless, impulsive, indiscreet, and liable to be perverse; but they should be dealt with at least justly. Parents and the managers of public schools should see to it that children under their control are treated with due tenderness and moderation; and teachers should be made to understand that all passionate and unjust dealings with children are criminal, and will provoke at least a righteous public indignation.

# XVI.

# ODDS AND ENDS-Continued.

#### A SPELLING MATCH.

WHEN I was a lad, probably ten years old, there were two rival schools in my neighborhood. The rivalry culminated in a "Spelling Bee," to adopt a modern Americanism, but it was then called a spelling match. Reading was taught in the schools with no regard to accent or emphasis, and with very little to punctuation, and the glibbest reader was deemed the best. Composition was an art unknown, and the word would have been accounted outlandish in most of the schools. Spelling was the one branch of learning on which they prided themselves. The schools above alluded to boasted of their attainments in this popular exercise, each claiming to excel the other. Public opinion was divided on the subject, and it was resolved to submit the question to the test of experiment.

Each school selected a champion speller. John Houston was the standard-bearer of one school. He was a bright, modest, promising boy, not far from a dozen years old. I was chosen to vindicate the honor of the other school. I was larger, but probably not older than John, and certainly was not less ambitious to excel than he was. We were, for some weeks, carefully trained for our literary contest. All things were in readiness for it.

The schools, situated four or five miles apart, met at an intermediate blacksmith's shop. Under the shade of oaks rude seats had been prepared for the accommodation of the schools and their friends. Quite an audience was present, as the match had excited no little interest in the quiet, rural neighborhood. Fortunately for their comfort, the day was calm, bright, and pleasant. The boys spelled alternately in the geographical vocabulary of Noah Webster's spelling-book. Each school looked with confidence for the success of its champion. For some time

the race was equal; but John began to misspell words rather frequently. I had failed on one or two, and he on six or eight. His teacher, gazing at him with an anxious look, said: "John, you are falling might'ly behind the stump"-an expression then common in that region. It was the language of solicitude, and not of reproof; but whatever might have been the interpretation that John put upon it, his feelings became uncontrollable, and he burst into tears and sobs, all the audience sympathizing in his grief, and none more sincerely than I. This ended the spelling match. I had triumphed, but I would have more heartily enjoyed my success had it not been associated with the deep mortification of my opponent, for whom I had a kind regard. More than sixty years have passed since the event, and quite half a century since I saw or heard of John Houston. He has probably departed from the land of the living; but if he is still on earth, it would afford me great pleasure to grasp his hand, for I am quite sure, from the excellent qualities of his boyhood, that he ripened into a solid, worthy man.

The spelling match was as far removed from gaming as the most ascetic moralist could desire. It was agreed that if John won, his teacher would give him a knife; and if I was successful, my teacher would give me one. In that day and in that region, where so little was contributed to the enjoyment of boys, the knife would have been to me a treasure; but I never received it. Whether my teacher thought I had not fairly won it, or it would be too heavy a draft on his meagre resources, or his memory was less tenacious than my own, it is needless now to inquire.

#### FALSE ECONOMY.

When I was eleven years old my father resided in the town of Salem, then Botetourt, now Roanoke county. As a reward or a gift, I received a fourpence ha'penny—a small silver coin, worth six and a quarter cents, then in general circulation. From my childhood I have had greater aptitude for spending than for gaining or keeping money. After due consideration, I resolved to spend my first fourpence ha'penny for ginger

cakes-a kind of sweet bread then sold at musters and other public gatherings. An old woman cake-baker resided on the suburb of the town. To her house I repaired to invest my money. On arriving at the place I inquired of her if she had any ginger cakes. She replied that she had none. This was a damper. I was disappointed, for I was fond of the cakes, and had anticipated much enjoyment in eating them. I was balked, but not defeated. The money was of no use to me unless I could spend it. As cakes and beer were usually sold together, I asked the old woman if she had any beer. She answered that she had no beer, but had some cider. For several years I had abstained from the use of distilled liquors, but had indulged in drinking cider. I had no special desire for it, but as there was no other way of using my money, I requested her to let me have fourpence ha'penny worth of cider. The old woman soon brought out a quart of it, and I handed her my money. On tasting it, I was sorely disappointed. It was hard, bitter, and positively nauseous. If my father had had a thousand gallons of such cider I should not have drunk a spoonful of it. I was, however, in a dilemma. I must either drink the cider or lose my money. To drink the cider was revolting to my taste, and to lose the money was in violation of my economy. After some hesitation my love of money triumphed over my aversion to hard cider. I resolved to drink it, and save the fourpence ha'penny.

How much of the cider (vinegar more properly) I drank, I do not recollect; but I remember that my head became dizzy, and I indulged in some rudeness to the cake-baker, which she threatened to report to my father. I was not so much intoxicated as not to know that it would be unpleasant for my condition to be known in my family. I returned home, crept cautiously to my room, and went to bed. At supper time I was missing, and my absence caused no little surprise, as I was usually present at meals. Search was made for me, and I was found in my bed fast asleep. Some time during the night I awoke, felt qualmish, went to a window, and got rid of both my cider and my fourpence ha'penny.

My intoxication differed widely from ordinary cases of the evil. Usually men get drunk with a knowledge that their drunkenness will cost them money: I got drunk simply from a Ordinarily persons get drunk for the pleasure desire to save it. of indulging their appetite: I got drunk by offering a disgusting offense to mine. Most persons who get drunk once repeat the offense, and many of them until the vice becomes habitual and ruinous. One indulgence in the luxury satisfied me, and from that day to this I have carefully eschewed it. Drunkenness is not necessarily a sin. A man may be intoxicated by accident, through false views, or from deceptive motives, without guilt. I have recalled my inebriation with amusement rather than penitence, and have recorded it to teach that it is false economy to endeavor to save money by eating or drinking what one does not need.

#### THE WAR OF 1812.

This conflict commenced when I was ten years old. I have a vivid recollection of many events attending it. At its close I remembered every battle that had been fought, by land or by sea, with the number killed and wounded on both sides. The troops from Bedford suffered severely, not from the casualties of battle, but from the malaria of Eastern Virginia. At the commencement of the war, a noble volunteer company, commanded by Captain Mark Anthony, was marched to Norfolk, and at the close of its term of service, if my recollection is accurate, all except four were either dead or had suffered severely from disease. As the militia were drafted, and, from time to time, sent into the army, they were decimated by the fevers of the low country. It is due to them to say that they met the requisitions on them with promptness and courage, and if there was a case of desertion among them I have no recollection of it.

I have introduced this subject to record an event which occurred at the close of the war. I resided about seven miles from the town of Liberty. In that place there was a small cannon, by which the patriotic citizens usually announced the victories of the American arms. One afternoon there was an un-

usual amount of firing. I was sent for by my grandfather, who resided near my home, and dispatched on a fleet horse to Liberty to learn the news. I performed the service with no little pleasure. On reaching the town I found the inhabitants frantic with delight at the intelligence that a peace had been established between the belligerent powers. I lost no time in returning to bear the tidings of peace, and had the honor to be the first to proclaim it along the road to my home. Wherever I saw a person in a house, on the road, or in a field, white or colored, I cried: "Peace! peace!" On approaching my grandfather's, where many were on the tiptoe of expectation to hear the news, I quickened my horse into full speed, crying at the top of my voice: "Peace! peace!" I have made many trips, but never so joyful a one as that. Tears of gladness and loud huzzas attended me all along my route. I had the privilege of proclaiming a sudden and unexpected deliverance from a great national calamity, of which the community around me was enduring its full share.

This event furnishes an illustration of the words of Paul, quoted from Isaiah: "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things." The glory of the message is in some measure transferred to the messenger. When I bore the glad tidings of peace, my garments might have been soiled or rent, and my face and feet covered with dust; but who cared for my appearance? It was overlooked in the joy of the message, or rather it derived a beauty from the good news which I brought. Just so it is with those who proclaim the gospel. To persons duly awake to the evil of sin, the value of the soul, and the preciousness of salvation, there is something attractive in the preacher of the gospel. His very feet, covered with perspiration and dust, seem beautiful to those who receive from his lips the glad news of redeeming mercy.

I must mention briefly one thing more. The war was followed by a wild and reckless spirit of speculation. Tobacco commanded enormous prices, and real estate quadrupled in its estimated value. Men who were not worth a dollar were ready

to contract debts to the amount of thousands. I remember hearing plain, thoughtful farmers predict that Lynchburg would become as great a city as London. I know not how many towns were named and laid off upon Staunton river, in anticipation that it would become a navigable stream, the lots in which were sold at exorbitant prices. In a few years the crash came. Stay laws were advocated, debts were repudiated, property sunk to a fourth, or even a less proportion, of its recently supposed value. The times were really hard. Creditors and debtors, the rich and the poor, suffered alike. It was at least ten years before the country recovered from its terrible depression. One can be but struck by the resemblance of the consequences of the war of 1812 to those of the late war. In that time, speculation ran higher: in this, the evils have been magnified by stay and bankrupt laws. In both cases there was a fearful demoralization of society, especially in regard to the payment of debts; but in the latter case it has been increased by unwise legislation. Strange that the lessons of the war of 1812 should have been forgotten in half a century!

# XVII.

#### ASCETICISM.

THIS term denotes the practice of "undue rigor and self-denial in religious things." It is an evil peculiar to no age and to no form of religion. It has its origin in the desire to substitute for moral duties austerities congenial with the carnal mind, or to atone for neglected duties by the performance of works of supererogation. It gave birth to monasticism, with its multiplied evils, among Roman Catholics. Its mischiefs, however, are by no means limited to them. There are few Christian sects whose views and lives are not, more or less, influenced by it.

In my boyhood days, ascetic notions were quite prevalent in all the Christian denominations around me. The Methodists were specially strict in their religious discipline. Their female members were rigidly forbidden to adorn themselves with jewelry, bows, ribbons, or curls. Their simple style of dress was, as I then thought, and as I still think, becoming and beautiful. The evil referred to lay not in the simplicity of their dress, but in its enforcement as a duty. Men, for drunkenness, dishonesty, or other vices, might be tenderly dealt with and pardoned; but woe to the thoughtless damsel who ventured to deck herself with rings, or curls, or plumes, or to engage in the giddy dance. Nothing could save her from excommunication and disgrace, except the most penitent confession and the most solemn promise to abstain in future from these ungodly practices.

Before I reached maturity, a young Methodist preacher of respectable family and of fine promise was stationed in the town of Lynchburg. A great revival took place under his ministry, and many were added to his church. A writer in a paper of the town gave a glowing description of the labors and success of the young pastor. Among other things which

he preached, it was stated that he told the people: "Except ye wear your hair straight, ye cannot be saved." Whether the remarks of the evangelist were fairly reported, I cannot say. This much, however, I may confidently affirm: The oracular remark created no surprise, but was rather received as a proof of the sanctity and fidelity of the young minister. A man so strict in matters of fashion, it was inferred, could not be neglectful of "judgment, mercy, and the weightier matters of the law."

Baptists, less rigorous than Methodists in their notions of religious duties, were quite ascetic in their practice and discipline. They were lax enough in regard to morals, but severely intolerant of what were called worldly pleasures. These were from the devil, and led straight to perdition. On becoming a Baptist, one was expected to renounce the pleasures of the world—not only dancing, but all games, sports, and amusements—and to be grave, avoiding mirth and frivolity. This rule was not rigidly enforced, but its observance was deemed essential to high Christian character, and peculiarly necessary to ministers of the gospel.

I have stated the ascetic notions of the times mainly for the purpose of showing their influence on my own life. In that day it was customary for young men to wear their hair curled on their foreheads, an adornment secured, in most cases, by the use of pomatum. In the commencement of my religious course, I combed my hair straight, thus bringing myself within the possibility of salvation as taught by the Lynchburg divine. My compliance with this rule was easy, as my hair was naturally straight. All amusements I abandoned at once, and without difficulty, as I had little opportunity, and less inclination, to indulge in them. There was one duty which I did not find it so easy to practice. Laughing was deemed, if not sinful, at least quite unbecoming for a Christian, and especially a preacher. In this view I concurred. Living in a world filled with sin and cursed of God, with thousands passing daily to perdition, it appeared to me most inappropriate that I should indulge in mirth. This view seemed to be confirmed by the

fact that, so far as the Scriptures teach, Jesus wept, but never laughed. The duty seemed clear, but its observance was quite uncongenial with my temperament. This was vivacious, cheerful, and strongly inclined to mirth. I resolved, however, to maintain my gravity. For a time I succeeded well. Not a laugh escaped from my lips, and scarcely a smile lightened my countenance. At length, however, some amusing thing was said or done that upset my gravity, and my laughter was all the more convulsive and vociferous because of the long-continued restraint that I had imposed upon it.

This untimely and sinful outburst of mirth was followed by a season of gloom, confession, penitence, tears, prayer, and earnest resolution not to be overtaken again with the fault. For some time I carefully watched against my besetting sin, and maintained an unbroken solemnity of countenance. It was not long, however, before, in an unguarded moment, some facetious remark or ludicrous event overcame my resolution and threw me into a paroxysm of laughter, to be followed by another season of humiliation, sorrow, and promised amendment.

For several years this conflict between my sense of duty and my natural temperament was continued. Gradually, however, I was led to embrace, as I now judge, sounder views on the subject. Laughing is a native instinct of man. It is as natural for him to laugh as it is for him to smile, or weep, or move, or sleep. "There is," says Solomon, "a time to laugh"—a time when it is natural, proper, and commendable to laugh. God has not only endowed us with a capacity and tendency to laugh, • but has surrounded us with scenes and brings us into associations adapted to inspire mirth. Laughter is one of the first signs of intelligence in infancy, and one of the last exercises of healthful humanity. Laughter may be untimely. We may laugh when we should weep, or laugh at that which should fill us with indignation or with grief. Still, laughing at a right time, at proper objects, and with due restraint, is a harmless, healthful, and virtuous exercise; and the man who never laughs is to be pitied or suspected. I would not number him among my friends, or choose him as a companion.

It may be asked: If Christ never laughed, and he is our exemplar, what right have we to laugh? I should not deem this question worthy of an answer had I not recently seen it propounded in a religious newspaper. Christ did many things not recorded by the evangelists. We are not informed that he ever smiled, or washed his face, or slept on a bed; but we cannot logically infer that he never did these things, or that it is wrong for us to do them. Many things which Christ never did we may lawfully do. He never travelled in a railway car, or in a steamboat, but that fact furnishes no reason why we should not do it. The great underlying principle of all morality and of all duty is, that what is not forbidden, expressly or by fair implication, is allowable. Where there is no law, there is no transgression.

In fleeing from asceticism, we should be careful not to run into licentiousness. Of the two extremes, the latter is the worse. Asceticism, in its severest and most rigorous aspects, is compatible with sincere piety. The anchorite, who abjures all the legitimate pleasures of life, may be an earnest and acceptable worshipper of God. His piety is gloomy, morose, forbidding, but conscientious and fervent. John the Baptist was neither the more nor the less godly because he wore coarse garments, and lived on locusts and wild honey. Because, however, libertinism is the more dangerous extreme, we need not run to the other. God has placed us in a world filled with blessings and sources of enjoyment, and he requires, not that we should despise or reject them, but that we should accept them gratefully, use them temperately, and make them subservient to our happiness and usefulness.

Christ, not John the Baptist, is our exemplar. It is an illustrious proof of his divinity that, in his teaching and his example, he steered clear of the austerities of the Pharisees, on the one hand, and of the libertinism of the Sadducees on the other. He taught a system of morality rational in itself, adapted to men of all classes, climes, and ages, free alike from the useless burdens of superstition and the pernicious freedom of rationalism. He imposed no needless yoke on his disciples. He for-

bade nothing that was good, and required nothing that was injurious. To live according to his precepts is the highest wisdom, securing to men the greatest immunity from danger and the fullest measure of enjoyment, physical, intellectual, and religious.

### XVIII.

# MY EARLY ASSOCIATES IN THE MINISTRY.

IN the course of my Recollections, I have frequently referred to Elder William Harris, the pastor by whom I was baptized and introduced into the ministry. I may reasonably suppose that the reader desires to become better acquainted with him, and if he does not, I can assure him that the Elder is worthy of his acquaintance. He was a remarkable man in appearance, character, gifts, and influence. When I knew him most intimately, he was about forty-five years old. He was quite six feet high, neither lean nor fat, but well developed, of a vellow complexion, and almost entirely beardless. His hair, in the latter part of his life, was white, with a yellowish tinge, and worn long and hanging over his shoulders. His face bore an unmistakable smile of benevolence. His dress was homespun, differing neither in texture nor color from that worn by his neighbors. The fashion of his coat was peculiar. It had long skirts, with deep outside pockets, covered with broad flaps. In one of these the old man always carried a pipe, with the stem projecting not less than a foot above the flap. Persons inquiring for him on court-days and other public occasions were directed to look for the pipe stem, and it never misled them. Had Harris appeared in any assembly, a stranger would have been apt to inquire: "What tall, venerable-looking man is that?"

The character of Elder Harris was above reproach. A countyman, not remarkable for his charitable judgments of men, who had known him well for forty years, on being asked if he had ever heard any evil report of him, replied with promptness and emphasis: "No! and if I had, I should have known that it was a lie." Harris was an impersonation of kindness, honesty, and piety, with a slight mixture of humor.

The Elder was not a great preacher, if greatness is to be

measured by learning, logical acumen, an accurate knowledge of the Scriptures, or a vivid imagination. If, however, ministerial greatness is to be estimated by a capacity for usefulness, few had a higher claim to it than Elder Harris. Unaffected sincerity and earnestness were the chief elements of his power. No man ever heard him preach without feeling convinced that he was aiming, not to display his knowledge, or to show how well he could preach, or to please his hearers, but to save their souls. His sincerity beamed in his countenance, trickled in tears down his cheeks, modulated his voice, and controlled his gestures.

Of all the preachers we have ever heard, none were less promising in the beginning of their sermons than was Elder Harris. He preached not from careful preparation, but from the impulse of the moment. In the commencement of his discourse his speech was slow and unimpressive, his remarks were desultory, and he not unfrequently betrayed a lack of the knowledge of the connection of his text, and of its obvious meaning. His hearers need not be discouraged, but should patiently wait for the coming feast. It may not come at all, but it will be likely to come. As he advances, he warms with his subject. His thoughts brighten, his enunciation becomes more distinct and emphatic, the tones of his voice glide into an indescribable tenderness and pathos, and, before he has been preaching an hour, you conclude there is no use in attempting to resist the impression of the discourse, and you unconsciously hang your head and give full indulgence to your emotions and your tears. When the sermon is ended, you scarcely know why you wept, but you have a profound conviction that piety is a good thing, and in your inmost soul you can say with Balaam: "Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!"

Soon after I commenced my ministry I left my native county, and for many years had no opportunity of hearing my old pastor preach. I became accustomed to the preaching of Broaddus and Kerr, Semple and Brown (of Washington), Rice and Baptist, Staughton and Dagg, and other ministers re-

nowned for their learning, eloquence, and usefulness. I came to the conclusion that I had entirely overrated the pulpit power of the venerable Harris. I supposed that the impressions made on my own mind by his sermons were due rather to the tenderness of my youthful feelings and my inexperience, than to the power of the discourses. The effects that I had seen in large congregations under his ministry I attributed to the excitability of a plain, rustic people. When I was near fifty years old, and Harris was not far from eighty, I had several opportunities of hearing him preach, and, to my surprise, I was affected under his ministry precisely as I had been in my youth. No doubt his preaching had lost much of its fire and pathos, but it was marked by a simplicity, tenderness, and unction that moved me to tears, and made me feel what an awful thing goodness is.

Harris is dead, but the fruit of his labors has survived him, and will continue, doubtless, to the end of time. I question whether I have ever known a minister whose labors, directly and indirectly, have been more useful. He baptized probably thirty men who became pastors and evangelists, many of whom have been distinguished for their talents, popularity, and success. Among these may be mentioned the Witts, the Hatchers, Mills, Johnston, Pearcy, Barker, to say nothing of many whose names I do not even know.

Rev. William Leftwich was a true yoke-fellow of Elder Harris. The former was a few years older than the latter. Their lot was cast in the same field, and for more than forty years they harmoniously co-operated in evangelical labors. Leftwich was a native of Bedford county, and descended from one of its best families. His education was not liberal, but good for the time and region in which he was reared. He was of ordinary stature, ruddy complexion, neat in his attire, and bore the unmistakable marks of gentility. In his early years he was in public life, and represented his county in the Legislature of the State. We remember his saying that he heard Richard Henry Lee, of Westmoreland, speak in the Assembly, and that he was the greatest orator to whom he had ever listened. I

have found other proofs that he was one of the most learned and polished of the American revolutionary statesmen. Leftwich possessed by inheritance, or acquired by success in business, quite an ample estate. He lived in great comfort, and in a style superior to that of most of his neighbors and all his brother ministers of the upper country.

Elder Leftwich was a plain, sensible, sound, instructive preacher. His sermons were in better style, more methodical, and more doctrinal, but less pathetic and popular, than those of his brother Harris. The former aimed more at enlightening the mind, the latter at impressing the heart. The former was considered the abler, the latter was unquestionably the more useful preacher. In one respect, Leftwich excelled any preacher of his time and region. He was notably an experimental preacher. Whatever might be his text, and whether his theme was doctrinal or practical, he was sure to find a place for experimental remarks. He seemed to possess a wonderful knowledge of the human heart, with all its devices, emotions, and tendencies. Each hearer was apt to think that the preacher meant him, as the remarks seemed to be so perfect a delineation of his own experience. I can never forget a sermon which I heard him preach while under deep concern about my salvation. He was on his favorite theme—religious experience. He described with striking accuracy the inward conflicts of an awakened sinner—his hopes and fears, his resolves and failures. his convictions and sorrows. In the midst of his discourse he suddenly paused, and exclaimed, with unusual emphasis: "How much like a hypocrite he feels!" The effect of the words on my heart was electrical. That was precisely what I was feeling. While the remark tended to humble, it also inspired me with hope. I seemed to have a glimpse of one of the waymarks on the passage from death unto life.

In one particular, Elder Leftwich was entitled to the highest praise. Several of the young preachers who sprang up in Bedford and the contiguous counties, after the great revival, attained to a sudden notoriety. Some of the older preachers looked with suspicion, if not with jealousy, on the popularity of their younger brethren. Certainly no such feeling found a place in the bosom of Elder Leftwich. He kindly took them by the hand, encouraged them by his presence and inspiring words, gave them his fatherly counsel, and rejoiced in their successes as if they had been his own sons. It is not easy to estimate how much they were indebted to the friendship and encouragement of one so elevated in social life, so ripe in experience, and so wise in counsel as he was.

Elder Leftwich was no mean polemic. He was not pugnacious, as many ministers of the time were, but was always willing and ready to defend the truth. He was a Calvinist of the Fullerian school. He had Fuller's works, then just coming into notice in this country, read and studied them carefully, accepted their teaching heartily, and defended it bravely and vigorously. In argument, he was cool, deliberate, clear, and always courteous to opponents. He sometimes indulged slightly in a dry humor, which caused a smile at the expense of his antagonists. While he did not profess to be set for the defense of the gospel, he was really one of the clearest expounders and the strongest defenders of evangelical truth and of Baptist principles among the ministers of my early acquaintance.

# MY EARLY ASSOCIATES IN THE MINISTRY— Continued.

A MONG the most notable of my early acquaintances in the ministry was Elder William Davis, of Henry county, Virginia. I had known him from my boyhood. He was accustomed to make preaching tours in the regions around, and they were often extended into the county of Bedford. His appointments excited great interest, and drew large congregations. His appearance and manner of preaching were well adapted to make a deep impression on the mind of a boy. He was rather above the ordinary size, inclining to corpulency, with round features, and clad in the simple country style. In the pulpit his manner was free, bold, and not ungraceful. On a stage, in the open air, in his shirt sleeves, he would move backwards and forwards, as a gladiator prepared for combat, and inviting it.

Elder Davis had acquired the sobriquet of the "Arminian Skinner." He believed that God had raised him up for the special purpose of fighting the Methodists, and right manfully did he follow his vocation. He was no mean polemic. Endowed with a vigorous intellect, his culture had been neglected, and the measure of his information was small. though narrow, were sharp and clear, and he could deliver them in coarse, strong language. He knew the weak points of Arminianism, and could strike them with no little force. I give a specimen of his style of preaching. "The Baptists," he said, "are the greatest bunglers that I have ever known. I have been attending their Associations for many years, but I have never known a soul convicted, converted, and finished off at a single meeting; but the Methodist can convict, convert, and finish off from fifty to a hundred souls at a single camp-meeting. Soon, however, the poor things fall from grace; and, oh, what a disappointment! The poor souls are disappointed; the

Methodists are disappointed; and God is disappointed. The only way to save Methodist converts is to cut off their heads and send them straight to heaven.''

The Methodists returned the assaults of the Baptist gladiator with such blows as their strength and ingenuity could inflict. Elder Davis, in one of his missionary tours, had an appointment to preach at the Quaker meeting-house, on the southern border of Bedford county. It was rumored that Rev. Mr. Hunter, a Methodist circuit rider, would be present at the meeting, with certificates to prove that the Elder had been guilty of drunkenness. Having been informed of this rumor, he made his appearance at the time and place appointed, with documents for the vindication of his character. The congregation was large, and the expectation of a ministerial conflict general and intense. As Davis was proceeding in his sermon, Mr. Hunter stepped in at the door in front of the preacher. He knew his antagonist, and the effect of his presence was electrical. It was seen at once in the increased boldness of manner, the greater volume of voice, and the more vigorous thought of the preacher. When he had finished his discourse, without a moment's delay, he said: "I have heard that a Methodist circuit rider would be here to-day with certificates to prove that I have been guilty of drunkenness. If he is present, I wish him to show himself." Mr. Hunter was entirely unprepared for such an assault as this. He expected to be the assailant, and not the defendant. He arose to his feet, was confused, and made some remarks which indicated that he was vacillating in his purpose. Davis instantly entered upon the defense of his character. He read, or caused to be read, many documents, seemingly of high authority, setting forth that he had been charged with drunkenness by sectarian influence and triumphantly vindicated from the charge. The reading of the documents was interspersed by many pertinent and caustic remarks by the accused. When he had finished his defense, Mr. Hunter, having recovered his self-possession, arose to read his certificates in proof of the drunkenness of Davis; but the audience had prejudged the case. The boldness of the accused had won the day even before he was attacked. The circuit rider read his documents to a restless, inattentive audience, whose minds were preoccupied in favor of the accused. The triumph of Davis was complete.

The congregation was neither required nor competent to decide the case. That Davis used strong drink habitually and freely, I do not doubt. Almost all ministers, of all denominations, and indeed all Christians, as well as people of the world, used it constantly and under no strict restraint. Good men, in unguarded moments, were liable to use it to excess. Davis might have used it incautiously, and furnished ground for the suspicion and charge brought against him; but he should be judged, not according to the strict temperance views of the present day, but according to the notions and customs prevailing in his time.

An event illustrative of the drinking customs of the period occurs to my mind. Witt and myself preached in the town of Leakesville, in North Carolina. The service was held in an academy. The congregation was large, seemingly intelligent and refined, and we both preached with unusual freedom. At the close of the service we were expecting to accompany Elder Davis some miles to the house of one of his friends. While we were on our horses, waiting for our companion to guide us, a man came to us and requested us to go down into the village to drink wine. We scarcely treated him with common politeness. The invitation seemed to us to be little less than an insult. Soon, however, Davis and his friends came to us, saving that we had all been invited down into Leakesville to drink wine, and that we must go. We silently submitted to the decision, supposing that we should be led into some genteel parlor to partake of wine—an indulgence which we carefully avoided. What was our surprise, when on reaching the centre of the village, and while the congregation was passing from the religious services, to find that the wine was brought out in a pitcher and distributed among the guests in the street. We felt indignant, and turned the tails of our horses to the grogshop, exhibiting more displeasure in our manner than was compatible with our relations with those who ruled the drinking ceremony. I mention this incident as a proof, not that Davis was intemperate, but of the free and easy manner in which intoxicating liquors were then used. Probably Witt and myself were the only persons to whom the drinking, under the circumstances, appeared improper; and our views on the subject of drinking were in advance of the times.

It was my misfortune early to lose the favor of Elder Davis. In doctrine, he was an extreme predestinarian, if not an antinomian. He denied that it was the duty of sinners to be converted, on the ground that they could not convert themselves, and that it would be unjust in God to require of them what was impossible. I had not been so taught by Elder Leftwich, who had read the works and adopted the views of Andrew Fuller. I ventured to call in question the opinion of Elder Davis. We entered into a discussion. I asked whether it is the duty of sinners to love God. To deny it, would be to annul the divine law. He was obliged to admit that it was their duty. I then asked him if they were able to keep the law of God. The Elder, who was not devoid of logical acumen, saw that he had run upon a snag. That one so young and inexperienced as I should call in question the soundness of the doctrine of a minister so distinguished as he was, he deemed an unpardonable offense. He never knew a young minister, he said, who differed from him in opinion to turn out well. Some of his admirers, too, thought that I had been guilty of insufferable presumption in calling in question the soundness of the faith of one who, through all that region, was the standard of orthodoxy.

Elder Davis was the leader of the anti-mission faction. He was a member of the Mayo Association, but he exerted a controlling influence over the churches of the Strawberry Association lying south of the Staunton river, and was the ruling spirit of the Pigg River Association, into which these churches were organized.

It is proper that I should give my estimate of the character and abilities of Elder Davis. He was, I doubt not, a good man; but his character, naturally enough, was formed by the

circumstances under which he lived. He possessed a vigorous intellect, but his education was poor, he read few books, his knowledge of the world was limited to the narrow sphere in which he lived, and almost all his associates acknowledged his superiority. He fell into a natural mistake. Being the greatest minister of his region, he formed an exalted opinion of his abilities. The deference paid him by his associates made him self-confident, overbearing, and intolerant. I have never known a man more impatient of contradiction than he was. To differ from him in opinion was to incur his displeasure. He undoubtedly possessed great force of character. He made and left an impression on the community in which he lived, in many respects, I think, unfortunate, but which a half a century has not sufficed to erase.

Had Elder Davis received early and careful intellectual culture; had he enjoyed the means of extensive knowledge; had he associated with men of learning and wisdom; had he mingled more with the world in its various pursuits, and had he been devoted to earnest and well-directed studies, he would have thought far less of his own abilities, and been held in far higher estimation by his age. In short, I think that he possessed native abilities which, with proper improvement, would have made him a man in any community and in any sphere, but which, being sadly neglected, made him of the class of men who would rather be "judges among fools than fools among judges."

# MY EARLY ASSOCIATES IN THE MINISTRY— Continued.

WITH Rev. John S. Lee I was not intimately connected, though I knew him from my boyhood. He was the founder and first pastor of the Baptist church in Lynchburg, and for many years the popular clerk of the Strawberry Association. He was born in the Northern Neck, was a worthy member of the Lee family, but whether he was related to the illustrious Lees of that region, I cannot say. He was tall, slender, with sharp features and an uncommonly long nose. My first impressions of him were exceedingly favorable. He was clothed in broadcloth, and in my boyhood I deemed all men great who wore broadcloth. His manners were precise and dignified, quite unlike those of the rustic preachers who usually attended the Association. The probability is that he never delivered a sermon in his shirt sleeves. Then, too, he came from a town, the centre, as I supposed, of all learning and refinement. His preaching did not produce the same impression on me as that of Harris or Leftwich; but I imagined that he was greatly superior to them in knowledge and in all the arts of oratory.

After I grew to manhood, and became better acquainted with Brother Lee, my opinion of his abilities were greatly modified, and much more, doubtless, in harmony with his own. He was a good man, very conscientious, and quite rigid in his religious principles. He had no great pulpit power, but was unflinchingly faithful in preaching and defending what he deemed truth. In his ministry he dwelt much on the doctrine of human depravity. At all times, in all places, and before all audiences the discussion of it was considered in order. It lay at

the foundation of the gospel, and it was a most prolific theme for argument, illustration, and practical remarks. There was no doctrine, fact, duty, or privilege of Christianity with which he could not blend his favorite subject. He could scarcely be placed in a situation in which he could not gracefully glide into its discussion. An incident in his life will best illustrate his power in this respect.

An acquaintance of his had died. His will was offered for probate, and resisted by the heirs at law, on the plea of his insanity. The case was tried before the late Judge William Daniel, of the Lynchburg district, remarkable for the sternness of his manner. Many witnesses were examined in the case, and Brother Lee among the rest. After he was duly sworn, the Judge began his examination: "Mr. Lee, did you know the deceased?" "Yes, sir." "Did you consider him insane?" "Yes, sir; all men by nature are." The Judge, being himself in a natural state, seemed a little nonplussed; but after a brief delay, he said: "You may stand aside, Mr. Lee. Sheriff, call another witness." If Brother Lee was not always wise, he was always honest.

Among my early acquaintances in the ministry was Elder Moses Greer, of Franklin county, Va. He was of a highly respectable family, and fully sustained its respectability. He was rather above the ordinary stature, quite lean, and very plain in his dress, as were all the preachers of his region. His manners were simple and unaffected. He was past the meridian of life when Witt and myself were entering on our ministry. He was of very tender feelings, rarely failing to mingle a profusion of tears with his prayers and exhortations. He was a clear, sound preacher, and as free from ambition as could well be desired. In a small circuit in his county he passed his life in unostentatious efforts to do good. In his latter years he was led off from the main body of the Baptist denomination by the antimission faction. Let him not be severely censured for this. His means of information were very limited, and the missionary work, as it was presented to him by the leaders of the faction, seemed to be a very evil thing. I record, with gratitude and

pleasure, this testimonial of his hospitality and kindness to me, when, as a stripling and a stranger, I visited his neighborhood.

Elder Greer was remarkable for two things: The first was intoning. Of all the preachers we have known, he carried this art to the highest perfection. He sung his hymns, prayers, sermons, and exhortations all in the same tune, and a most mournful tune it was. No one not greatly given to levity could hear it without solemnity. All in sympathy with the intoner had their hearts stirred within them. If a stranger, unacquainted with his language, had heard his intonations he would have concluded that the old man was in fearful distress. If Brother Greer were living, with his voice unimpaired and his sympathies unblunted, the clergymen who are reviving the art of intoning would find themselves much profited under his instruction and by imitating his unaffected example.

The second thing for which the good Elder was notable was spiritualizing the Scriptures. On that line he went beyond Origen himself, the father of the system. "I believe," he said—I remember his words well—"that every tex" (a common pronunciation in that day) in the Bible; and not only every tex', but every word; and not only every word, but every letter; and not only every letter, but every crook and dot of every letter, has a spiritual meaning." Beyond that theory it is not possible for human ingenuity to go. The excellent brother did not deem himself skilled in discerning the spiritual import of the Scriptures. He was careful not to venture in the ocean of divine truth much beyond his depth. When he allegorized the Scriptures, he was cautious to find in them only such truths as were generally received by evangelical Christians. It was wonderful how the spiritualizers did mix up in their sermons things true and fanciful, things spiritual and material, and they were generally accounted ingenious and wise in proportion as they gave the widest range to their imaginations and drew their sermons from the most unpromising sources.

Among the Baptist preachers who attracted particular attention at the Associations and other big meetings in my early years was Joshua Burnett, of the region now known as Roanoke county. When I knew him he was past the meridian of life, tall, lank, and of delicate appearance. His sermons were very short, usually occupying not more than half an hour, free from the holy tone then so common in the pulpit, and delivered in a very quiet, solemn manner. He was one of the most popular preachers of the whole region. When he was sent to the stand the Association had but few attendants except its members.

I heard Elder Burnett preach but seldom, and never after I commenced my ministry. Of one of his sermons I have a distinct recollection. During the time that I was under religious concern I went to hear him in a rude wood house on Goose creek, which has been succeeded by the respectable brick church called Mount Zion. The old man preached from I Peter. i: 13: "Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end." His discourse was based principally on the word "loins," which he understood as if it had been spelled lines. The discourse was allegorical, according to the prevalent custom. He considered the different uses of the word lines—lines for the guidance of workmen—lines for the division of lands—lines for governing work-beasts,—and lines for the running of coaches. From these various kinds of lines he ingeniously drew spiritual instruction. The reader must not judge of the merit of the sermon by its fanciful outline. earnest preacher contrived to mingle much sound religious instruction with his wild conceits. I was not greatly impressed by the sermon. It did not contain the food for which I was hungering.

My acquaintance with Elder Burnett's ministry does not justify me in forming a positive opinion of its merit. I am, however, well acquainted with a lay brother who has long resided in the region where the venerable preacher lived, labored, and died, and he assures me that he was held by his neighbors in the highest estimation for his piety, his gifts, and his labors. He left behind him a fragrant reputation and a wholesome religious influence.

Very false estimates are made of the talents of preachers. He is the best preacher who is best fitted to do good. Preachers are usually valued according to their learning, the beauty of their style, the freshness and splendor of their conceptions, and their power to fascinate their hearers; but many such preachers are to their hearers "as one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument," for men hear their "words, but do them not." On the other hand, there are preachers of little learning, a small stock of knowledge, and none of the graces of oratory, who, by their simplicity of style and manner, their unction, and the directness of their discourses, are mighty in winning souls for Christ. In short, the Lord employs men of various gifts for various purposes, and grants them success according to his own pleasure; and all should be duly prized. "Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas . . . . all are yours; and ve are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

#### XXI.

#### PREVALENT SUPERSTITIONS.

THE word "superstition" has quite a variety of meanings. I use it to denote the dread of imaginary beings or evils. It has prevailed, more or less, among all peoples, barbarous and civilized, and in all ages. It is more common among the ignorant than among the cultivated classes of society, but is by no means limited to them. The grosser superstitions of my neighborhood were passing away at the time of my boyhood. I never saw a witch, or a woman reputed to be one, though I heard many thrilling stories of witches that had recently resided in the vicinity. My father and mother were entirely free from superstition. They never gave the slightest credence to the witch and ghost stories then current in the community. I adopted the views of my parents; but, in spite of my incredulity, in the dark and alone, I was terribly afraid of seeing something which I might imagine was a ghost. In about a mile of my residence was a place called Gatson's. It was an old field, overgrown with bushes and young pines, from which almost every vestige of a dwelling had been removed. Here, before my birth, resided old Mrs. Gatson. Her neighbors believed most unquestionably that she was a witch. I heard my grandfather, who lived near her, tell this story about her:

One of her neighbors suffered loss by a disease among his cattle or hogs, and Mrs. Gatson was strongly suspected of having bewitched them. It was resolved that the matter should be put to a test. It was believed that if new needles were boiled in a pot the witch would come to the house and not be able to enter it unless she could pick up something in the yard to take with her. Arrangements were made for the trial. The yard was carefully swept, and every movable thing was taken away. New needles were put into a pot of boiling water, and all were on the *qui vive* for the arrival of Mrs. Gat-

son. Sure enough, she soon made her appearance, walked through the yard, and, picking up a little child that had been permitted to stray beyond the door, went directly into the house. The trial had been a partial failure, but the measure of success had been sufficient to strengthen the suspicion that she was a witch. She removed from the neighborhood, but left behind her, among the superstitious, the unwavering belief that she was a witch.

There had been, in my early days, a great abatement of the superstitions of the past, but still they lingered among ignorant people, and especially among the negroes. Story-telling was one of the common amusements of the times, and these stories usually related to witches, hags, giants, prophetic dreams, ghosts, and the like. The dread of jack-o'-lanterns, graveyards, and ghosts was quite common, and extended much beyond the avowed belief in their reality. Haunted spots were quite common, to which timid passengers usually gave a wide berth in the night. Ghosts were not unfrequently seen gliding about in the twilight or in the moonshine, clothed in white. Indeed, I came very near seeing a ghost myself. When I was a lad, having been at work in a distant field, I was returning home by moonlight. At a sudden turn in the road I saw, directly before me, an object, ghost-like in color, but of a dim and undefined shape. I surveyed it with more alarm than pleasure. At first it seemed still, but after I had gazed at it awhile it seemed to move slowly from side to side in the road. My father had a servant, an old man, who was coming not far behind me, who made great boasts of his heroism. He had no fear of ghosts. He was, however, when he came up, startled by the apparition. After carefully eyeing it, and duly considering the danger, and arming himself with a bludgeon. he resolved to approach it. As he advanced with slow and trembling steps, I marched close behind him, and found that the supposed ghost was a wagon loaded with white plank, that had broken down and been left in the road. Many such ghosts were seen in that day.

In my early years I resided a short time in the county of

Campbell. Near my residence was a haunted spot, which most persons passed with dread in the dark. It was known that a timid man was to go that way on a certain night. A mischievous wight determined to frighten him. He communicated his purpose to a young man, who resolved to play the same prank on him. Quite early this latter trickster was at the haunted place, wrapped in a sheet, and carefully concealed. In due time the other mischievous fellow, in ghostly garb, took his position. Soon the unsuspecting but faint-hearted passenger made his appearance, and, frightened by what he supposed to be a ghost, took to his heels, with the ghost in pursuit. At the proper time ghost No. 2 joined in the chase. The scene became intensely exciting. The foremost ghost, alarmed in turn, cried to the object of his pursuit: "Stop, Dick! stop, Dick! I am not Plunkett" (the name of the man whose ghost was supposed to haunt the place), "but here he is behind me." It was a great relief when it was discovered that the supposed ghosts were mischievous spirits, clothed with flesh and blood.

Superstitious notions were by no means limited to the Piedmont portion of Virginia. When, in the early period of my ministry, I visited Princess Anne, the extreme southeastern county of the State, I saw a horse-shoe nailed on the steps of many houses. I had seen the like in my native county. I knew that it was intended as a protection against witches. It was supposed that they could not enter a dwelling at whose door a horse-shoe was nailed. It was a strange notion. It was a fixture that presented no obstacle to the entrance of ordinary men and women; how, then, could it be a barrier to the admission of witches, who, to the common powers of humanity, added the cunning and resources of evil spirits. Superstition does not reason: it simply believes, without reason or against it.

There is a strong tendency to superstition in human nature. When it becomes rooted, it is almost ineradicable. It had an early and vigorous development in Princess Anne county. In the Colonial times Grace Greenwood was tried there for the crime of witchcraft. A jury of women examined her person,

and reported to the court that she bore marks—moles, doubtless, they were—not common to other women, which they deemed strong presumptive proof of her guilt. What became of poor Grace, the preserved records do not show; but certain it is that half a century ago the people of her region deemed it necessary to guard against the mischiefs of witchcraft by carefully fastening horse-shoes on the steps of their doors.

Superstition was not confined to country people. were traces of it, especially among the colored people, in this city, less than forty years ago. I remember well a case of discipline which came before the First Baptist church during my pastorate. A colored man had been excluded from its communion before my pastorate commenced. At a meeting held specially for the exercise of discipline among the colored members, the old man appeared, having passed the ordeal of the colored deacons, to gain restoration to church membership. He made frank confession of his faults, and fair promises of amendment in the future, and was on the point of being voted into the church, when deacon Archibald Thomas, a pretty strict disciplinarian, said to the penitent: "Do you believe in witchcraft?" He answered promptly and firmly, "I do." "Did you ever see a witch?" continued the deacon. "Did you ever see the devil?" with some hesitation, answered the old man. The laugh was turned on the deacon.

This altercation brought to his feet one of the colored deacons, Simon Bailey. The candidate had received the sanction of the deaconship, and it was proper that their decision should be vindicated. Simon was a good man; illiterate, but sensible; a devout and faithful Christian. He might be superstitious, but superstition had no power to turn him from the path of duty. He stated that he had lived in the country, and that, with his own eyes, he had seen the manes and tails of horses twisted into stirrups. He was chary, in the presence of Deacon Thomas, of expressing any opinion of the cause of this entanglement, but it was the common opinion that the horses were rode by witches, and, for his own part, if these stirrups were not made for them he could not tell what they were made for.

What disposition was made by the church of the believer in witchcraft, I do not now recollect. Quite sure I am that, with my present views on the subject, his belief in witchcraft should have been no barrier to his admission to church membership. Paul believed in witchcraft. "The works of the flesh are these," he says, "witchcraft," among the rest. The word is rendered "sorcery" in the revised version of the passage. What it was, it may not be possible for us precisely to know. Coneybeare & Howson define it to be the "profession of magical arts." The disciples of Jesus believed in the visibility of spirits, and supposed that their risen Lord was a spirit. convince them of his identity, he said to them: "Handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have." He reproved them, not for their credulity, but for their incredulity. He did not condemn their belief in spirits, but their failure to distinguish between him and a spirit. The tendency of the present century is to scepticism rather than to superstition. Whatever may be true in regard to witches and seeing ghosts, it is quite certain that belief in these things, while it may mar the consistency and beauty, does not prevent the reality and usefulness of true piety.

## XXII.

# THE ORGANIZATION OF THE BAPTIST GEN-ERAL ASSOCIATION OF VIRGINIA.

THIS event occurred in the city of Richmond, in the month of June 1822 of June, 1823. At its meeting in the town of Lynchburg, in the previous year, the Baptist General Meeting of Correspondence, organized some years before merely to keep up a friendly intercourse among the Associations of the State, resolved so to change its constitution as to become a domestic missionary society. Arrangements were made to consummate this plan at the place and the time named above. My friend, Daniel Witt, having in the preceding winter visited Richmond, and preached with great acceptance, received a cordial invitation to attend the meeting for the proposed organization. Without difficulty I was induced to accompany him. In due time, on horseback, equipped in such style as our means would permit, we set out to attend the meeting. We were accompanied and guided by Elder Robert Tisdale, a minister from the lower part of the State, who had spent two or three years among the mountains to regain his health. He was well acquainted with the route over which we were to pass, and with the arts of economical travelling. Of nights we staid at private houses, and were hospitably entertained—a custom then guite common with travelling ministers, and one well suited to our financial condition. Nothing of special moment occurred on our journey, but I was intensely interested in all that I saw and heard. I had never before been so far from home, and to me everything had a fresh and charming appearance. In my view, the James river was of magnificent size, and the city of Richmond, then about a fourth of its present dimensions, seemed to me to be of surpassing grandeur. The capitol exceeded all my conceptions of architectural greatness and beauty. The city made an impression on my youthful imagination more delightful and overpowering than in my declining years was made by the vastness of London, the beauties of Paris, or the wonders of Rome. I and my travelling companions put up at a boarding-house on Governor street, between Main and Franklin, kept by an excellent brother, who treated us very kindly, and at our departure charged us moderate board, with many apologies for charging us at all—apologies justified,

doubtless, by his cramped pecuniary circumstances.

The meeting for organizing the Association was held in the Second Baptist church—a building then incomplete, situated on a cross street, between Main and Cary. The congregation. at the opening of the services, was small. The introductory sermon was preached by Rev. R. B. Semple, from Heb. xiii: 16: "But to do good, and to communicate, forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." I had heard of the fame of Semple, but was greatly disappointed in his sermon. It was not the kind of preaching that I had been taught to admire. Its want of adaptation to my taste was no proof that it lacked merit. It was, I have no question, a plain, sensible, practical, and very appropriate discourse. Of the proceedings of the meeting I have no distinct recollection. After due consideration, a constitution was adopted, and the Baptist General Association of Virginia was organized. At that time there was great jealousy in the Associations, and among Baptists generally, of any body that was supposed to be able to encroach on the liberties and prerogatives of the churches. The fathers who organized the General Association were tremblingly alive to this jealousy, and intensely anxious to adopt such measures as should disarm all prejudices. In consequence they placed the Association under such restrictions that it could do little good or evil. Through long years it was crippled in its efforts to be useful by needless constitutional shackles which had, one after another, to be cast off, with no little discussion, and not always in a lovely spirit.

Though my recollections of the proceedings of the meeting are dim, my remembrance of many of the preachers and their sermons is quite vivid. I heard them preach with intense in-

terest, and their discourses made an indelible impression on my mind. Luther Rice preached at night, in the Second Baptist church, from Matt. xvi:17: "Blessed art thou, Simon Bariona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." The sermon fell far below my expectation, and equally below the reputation and abilities of the speaker. Rev. Edward Baptist preached in the Presbyterian church in the Valley, known as the "Pine-apple church," on Lord's-day afternoon. His text was Hab. iii:2: "O Lord, revive thy work." The sermon was chaste in style, beautiful in imagery, and graceful in delivery, but was hardly equal to the fame of the orator, and was far less eloquent and impassioned than sermons which I afterwards heard from his lips. Rev. O. B. Brown, of Washington, preached on Sunday morning in the First Baptist church, from Hab. ii: 14: "For the earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." It was a missionary discourse, delivered to a crowded audience, and was evidently the sermon of the occasion. Rev. James Fife preached on Monday afternoon, at the close of the business of the meeting, in the First church, to a pretty full congregation, from Heb. ii: 3: "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" His sermon was quite pathetic, and produced a deep impression on his hearers, as was evinced by their tears. Witt preached, but, preferring to listen to some strange minister, I did not hear him. His sermon, however, was heard with great pleasure, and its praise was on every tongue. On comparing these sermons, I would say that of Rice was the feeblest, that of Baptist the most beautiful, that of Brown the most profound, that of Fife the most impressive, and that of Witt the most popular. I preached on a week-day night at the Second Baptist church. The congregation was good, and Semple, Brown, and others distinguished for their knowledge and venerableness, concealed themselves in a remote part of the church, that I might not be intimidated by their presence. My text was Psalm xxvii: 1: "The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear?" Semple, who afterwards heard me preach frequently, always said this was as good a sermon as he ever heard me deliver. It was well for me, for it was more than seven years before I preached in Richmond again without embarrassment and mortification.

At this time I first saw several ministers whom I did not hear preach, but whom I afterwards knew well and prized. Among these I may mention the venerable Philip Montague (Blacky, as he was called, to distinguish him from a cousin of the same name); William Todd, the clerk of the Association; Eli Ball, then just arrived from Massachusetts, and subsequently the General Agent of the body; Addison Lewis, a scholarly man, whom, after the lapse of more than twenty years, I met in Missouri, and John Bryce, who had been long an associate pastor of the First church, was then residing in Fredericksburg, and, after many years, ended his days in Kentucky.

On this visit I became acquainted with Rev. John Courtney, the aged and revered pastor of the First Baptist church. He was quite superannuated, and did not attend any of the meetings of the Association. He was a tall, rawboned man, bowed beneath the infirmities of age, and occupying a plain framed house, now standing in the rear of the Roman Catholic cathedral. He was held in high esteem within and without the church, not for his learning or his eloquence, but for his good sense, incorruptible integrity, earnest piety, and faithful and useful labors. Rev. Henry Keeling was nominally his assistant, but really the sole pastor of the church. Rev. David Roper, a very intelligent but not popular preacher, in rapidly-declining health, filled the pulpit of the Second church, but was not its pastor.

It is to me an affecting thought, that of all the men, ministers and laymen, engaged in the formation of the Baptist General Association of Virginia, I only am in the land of the living. Elder James Fife, one of the fathers of the body, after a long life of useful labors, was the last to depart. These good brethren built more wisely than they knew. They laid the foundations of an edifice of whose noble proportions and grandeur

they formed no just conception. How would their hearts have swelled with gratitude and their tongues broke forth in strains of praise could they have foreseen the thousands of souls that would be converted, the hundreds of churches that would be founded, and the mighty missionary and educational influences that would be exerted by the feeble agencies they were putting in operation. If it is permitted to them in heaven to know the results of their earthly labors, their felicity is doubtless augmented by their view of the rich harvests that have been reaped, and are yet to be reaped, from the handful of seed cast by them in a seemingly unfruitful soil.

In human life the grave and the cheerful, the sorrowful and the ludicrous, are strangely mingled. On my first visit to Richmond an event occurred in which it is hard to say whether the sad or comical predominated. I had in Lynchburg formed the acquaintance of a brother H. and his good wife, who had removed to Richmond. They were poor, pious, and respectable. We were glad to meet after a year or two of separation, and so far from the place where our intimacy commenced. I was invited to dine with them, and readily accepted the invitation. They resided on the south side of Broad street, a few doors above Ninth. They occupied an upper story, the front room being a few feet higher than the rear one. The table was set in the front room, near the door opening into the back one. The dinner was, doubtless, the best that the amiable family could provide. We had partaken of it heartily, and were sitting at the board engaged in pleasant social converse. some chance Sister H, lost her balance and fell backward through the door, and in her fall, grasping the table-cloth, carried all the table ware with a terrible crash on the depressed floor of the rear room. It was a sad accident. The lady was painfully bruised, all the table crockery was broken, and the remnants of meats, pies, and preserves were mingled in sorrowful confusion. To add to the trouble, Brother H. was in feeble and declining health, and little able to repair the damage that had been done. The good man lamented his loss, and his excellent wife, forgetful of all else, groaned over her pains and bruises. I deeply sympathized with them, and could have wept over their distress; but the scene had a ludicrous as well as a sorrowful aspect. I knew that laughing, under the circumstances, would be unseemly and offensive. I resolved that I would not indulge in it. I have, however, never been able, under strong temptation, to control my risible faculties. On this occasion I had a severe struggle. I restrained my laughter as long as possible, put my head under the side of the table to conceal it, and finally burst into a vociferous laugh. My mirth was painful, but unavoidable. I was ashamed, mortified, humbled, but had not the self-control to apologize for my rude and unseemly behavior. Had I possessed the means I would gladly have restored the table furniture, but the contents of my purse were almost exhausted. I sympathized not the less sincerely with my friends because I laughed at their ludicrous misfortune.

## XXIII.

#### A MISSIONARY TOUR.

A T the time of the formation of the General Association of Virginia it was arranged that Daniel Witt and myself should, in the month of August, appear before its Executive Board, of which Dr. Semple was the president, in the county of King and Queen, then a centre of Baptist influence. The object of the interview was that we might be appointed to explore the western part of the State as a missionary field. At that time the Baptists of Virginia knew little of one another. Then there were no railroads, telegraphs, or religious newspapers. Travelling was performed almost entirely by private conveyances. Intercommunication between different portions of the State for political and commercial purposes was infrequent, and for religious objects almost unknown. The Board, before entering on its work for evangelizing the State, very naturally desired to know something of its religious condition.

According to appointment, we presented ourselves before the Board, and were duly appointed missionaries to explore its field of labor and report its spiritual condition. At that time there was quite a romance thrown around the missionary work. There seemed to be something peculiarly sacred and inspiring We deemed ourselves highly honored in the unsought and unexpected honor conferred on us. We accepted the appointment, and received our instructions, carefully written out in the beautiful chirography of Rev. Andrew Broaddus. After preaching several times in the county, as we had afterwards reason to believe with some profit to our hearers, we returned to Bedford to prepare for our western tour with no slight sense of responsibility upon us. With minds immature, and with little knowledge and experience, we were very imperfectly fitted for our mission; but perhaps, under all the circumstances, the Board could not then do better.

On some day in October, 1823, two young men, one beardless and the other nearly so, might have been seen journeying toward the setting sun. They were rudely, but after the common style, equipped for their tour, mounted on steeds strong but not gay, with well-stuffed saddle-bags, and overcoats and umbrellas strapped behind them. It was to them a movement of no little interest and consequence. Their first point of destination was the New River Baptist Association, to be held, if my memory is not in fault, at Reed Island meeting-house, in Grayson county. Their route, with which in part they had some acquaintance, was through the counties of Franklin and Patrick. In due time they reached their destination.

The Association was a small body. Its ministers were plain and illiterate, of narrow views and strong prejudices. anti-mission spirit was then just beginning to develop itself and muster its forces for the conflict which soon followed. and myself were looked upon with suspicion—as spies sent to search out the resources of the country. Another thing rendered us unpopular. Here we met Rev. Robert Tisdale, who had recently left the eastern part of the State to live and labor in the western. He resided in Monroe county, but in some of his journeys within the bounds of the New River Association he heard rumors of the disorderly conduct of a church member-desecration of the Lord's-day, I think it was-and preferred a charge against the supposed offender in his own church. The trial of the accused stirred up strife. Retaliatory charges were brought against Tisdale, and though they were of a trivial nature they rendered him extremely unpopular. Our previous acquaintance with him led us, perhaps indiscreetly, to espouse his cause; and being identified with him, in the minds of the brethren, we shared in his reproach. At Reed Island we did but little to promote the object of our mission, when, doubtless, if we had been wise we might have done much.

From this point we made a hasty circuit through the counties of Wythe, Giles, Monroe, Greenbrier, Pocahontas, Bath, Alleghany, and Botetourt. We were accompanied on our

route by Brother Tisdale as far as to Pocahontas county. He was of great service to us, as he was acquainted with the country, and secured for us an introduction into many families, and many facilities for acquiring information which otherwise we could not have enjoyed. We found in most places great destitution of religious instruction. Methodist circuit-riders had penetrated almost every neighborhood, but their labors were desultory, and many of them were very imperfectly fitted for their performance. There were Presbyterians in Lewisburg and at a few other points, but we neither saw nor heard of Episcopalians. Baptist churches were few, feeble, and widely scattered, supplied with occasional preaching by illiterate pastors, with whom, for the most part, the ministry was a secondary matter. Almost everywhere we met with isolated Baptists and persons entertaining Baptist views. Our reception was generally very cordial. The plain people welcomed us, we being as plain as they, to their coarse but abundant fare, and opened their houses freely for us to preach the gospel. There was no lack of mission fields. In almost every neighborhood we were invited to establish mission stations and send ministers to occupy them. Court-houses, school-houses, and private houses were offered for our occasional or constant use. We preached as often as our opportunities permitted, but as we were travelling, and had no means of sending appointments ahead of us, our congregations, gathered on short notices of limited circulation, were generally small.

The trip, though intensely interesting to us, with our very limited knowledge of the world, was not distinguished by any stirring incidents. A few events may not be unworthy of brief notice.

I preached at a private house in the Little Levels of Greenbrier; think that was the name of the valley. At that time religious controversy was common, and frequently conducted with great folly and fierceness. Almost every preacher was a polemic, and every polemic was ready on all occasions to do battle for his tenets. One of the subjects of controversy between Calvinists and Arminians was the doctrine of sinless per-

fection. Arminians affirmed, and Calvinists denied it; and each party was equally eager to defend its opinion. In my sermon I took occasion to attack the doctrine of sinless perfection. A Methodist class-leader present was resolved that no such heterodox notion should be proclaimed in the Little Levels of Greenbrier, and by means of shuffling his feet, stamping, and contradicting, he well-nigh, on this occasion, accomplished his purpose. I became embarrassed, and brought my remarks to a speedy but by no means triumphant conclusion. I was glad to learn, however, that the course of the class-leader was generally condemned in the community, even by his brethren.

I had the privilege of being present at the first regimental militia muster in the newly-formed county of Pocahontas. The hunting of bears and wolves called for different tactics from those taught in modern warfare. The muster was a farce. The regimental column, according to the description of a militia parade which I read in a comic almanac, "was zigzag at both ends and crooked in the middle." The perplexed colonel, not knowing by what evolution to extricate it from its confusion, rode in front of the tangled line, and, with his drawn sword pointing out the ground, cried, in a stentorian voice, somewhat mellowed by despair: "Come along here." The muster was of no religious importance, except that it afforded an opportunity for publishing an appointment for preaching in the neighborhood the next day.

I was at Huntersville, which figured so largely in the late war, when there were no buildings there except the log cabins of Mr. Bradshaw. It had recently been selected as the metropolis of the county of Pocahontas, and Mr. Bradshaw, the owner of the land, seemed as proud of the distinction as if he had been elected Lord Mayor of London. He named the place Huntersville, in honor of the distinguished class of persons in that region of bears and deer, of wolves and foxes, of which Mr. Bradshaw was himself a prominent member. At the time of my visit his cabin served all the purposes of court-house, clerk's office, and hotel, and prison, too, if any prison was used. I

am sorry that I did not preserve a copy of a notice to his customers which Mr. Bradshaw had posted in a conspicuous place on his premises. He had credited them, and fearing that they might repudiate their debts, he generously proposed an adjustment of his claims by receiving, at a fair valuation, whatever commodities his mountain friends might have to spare. In conception, language, orthography, and punctuation it was fairly entitled to a place among Disraeli's Curiosities of Literature.

About the close of November we reached our homes, thankful for the mercies which had accompanied us through our journey. After some delay we appeared in King and Queen county to report to the Board the results of our mission. Both Witt and myself had kept diaries of our tour. His, as he was the senior missionary, was read before the Board. In answer to questions proposed by our employers, we gave them all the information that we had gathered concerning the religious condition of the people, and the openings for the preaching of the gospel in the regions through which we had passed. Guided by this imperfect report, the Board selected the early fields of its operations, and commenced its evangelical labors in the State, which, through a period of more than half a century, have been prosecuted with a good degree of earnestness, diligence, and success.

I may mention an incident in conclusion. We stated before the Board that some man whom we saw in our travel said of Brother Tisdale: "He is too learned a man to be a preacher; he ought to be a lawyer." He was a sensible man, with very little education and no large stock of knowledge. When the statement was made, Andrew Broaddus, with a twinkle in his eye and with his inimitable grace, looking at Semple, said: "Brother Semple, if you and I had to try Brother Tisdale on that charge, we should acquit him."

## XXIV.

## MY RESIDENCE IN SUSSEX COUNTY.

MY visit to the county occurred in this way: Elder Nathaniel Chambliss, pastor of the High Hills and Sappony Baptist churches, had relatives residing in Bedford county, near the home of Daniel Witt. Through them he heard of the popularity and success of the young evangelist, and invited him, just before the meeting in Richmond which organized the General Association, to visit the county and preach to his churches. Witt requested me to accompany him, and I cheerfully acceded to the request.

At the close of the General Association we commenced our journey to Sussex, which then seemed to me to be a remote part of the world. Our first destination was Petersburg. Here we spent a Lord's-day. We were hospitably entertained by Brother Davenport, the main supporter of the Baptist church in the place. It was a feeble body, had recently erected a house of worship on a rivulet, far below the subsequent grade of the street, for which they were deeply in debt. They had sent out, or shortly afterwards sent out, an itinerant English minister, named Marcher, to collect money for the payment of their debt. The arrangement added slightly to its amount, but the generous agent accepted his collections as full compensation for his labors. It was arranged for Brother Witt and myself to preach on Sunday. Brother Davenport had heard Witt preach in Richmond, and was greatly pleased with his gifts, but he had serious doubts of my capacity to edify a Petersburg audience. It was appointed that Witt should preach in the morning and in the evening, the usual times of preaching; and, to avoid mortification, it was provided that I should hold an afternoon service. Witt acquitted himself well, as he was one of the surest extempore preachers I have ever The afternoon was long, my congregation was very

small and sleepy, and in my sermon I fulfilled the most gloomy forebodings of good Brother Davenport. He, no doubt, felt thankful that he had so judiciously arranged our appointments that I had brought but slight reproach on the cause which he had deeply at heart.

On Monday we renewed our journey to Sussex. Of the trip I remember nothing, except my surprise and amusement at seeing on the road long poles attached to tall posts, with a bucket at one end, to draw water from shallow wells. Such an arrangement was not only new to me, but would have been impracticable in the deep wells of the Piedmont country. We reached the hospitable home of Brother Chambliss late in the afternoon. It was a comfortable dwelling on the road from Petersburg to Belfield, not far from the point at which the Petersburg and Weldon railroad now crosses the Nottoway river, but long before railroads had been heard of. We were received with great cordiality, and for several weeks preached in the surrounding neighborhoods to large and interested congregations. Witt's engagements necessitated his early return to Bedford, but, through the persuasion of Brother Chambliss and the churches, and the encouraging prospect of usefulness, I was induced to remain in the county.

This was my first residence beyond my paternal roof, and certainly no stranger ever found a more pleasant home. Brother Chambliss boarded me and my horse gratuitously, made me generous and timely presents, and urged the churches to contribute to my support. His excellent wife vied with him in kindness, and spared neither pains nor expense to render my situation pleasant. Had I been an only son on a visit to them, after an absence of seven years, and expecting to leave them in a few weeks to see them no more on earth, they could not have treated me with greater consideration and kindness than they did throughout the three years that I sojourned with them. They laid me under imperishable obligations. While they lived I venerated them, and, though they have been dead many years, I have not ceased to hold them in grateful remembrance, and rejoice in this opportunity of making a record

of their excellence. Elder Chambliss was an honest, earnest, consistent Christian. In industry and management, he was an example to the whole community. As a preacher, he was sensible, solid, and faithful, laboring for nothing, and contributing largely to the pecuniary support of his churches. Mrs. Chambliss—"Aunt Judy," as she was generally called—was in all respects worthy of her husband—gentle, discreet, hospitable, a neat and systematic housekeeper; in short, a pastor's model wife. If their monuments corresponded in height and beauty with the excellence of their characters, they would attract the attention and win the admiration of all who might pass them.

My labors were not limited to the county of Sussex. house of Brother Chambliss was not my constant home, but my headquarters. It was far more common than it is now for preachers to itinerate. Pastors labored much as evangelists. I had but little seed to sow, but I scattered it unsparingly over a vast field. I preached through the counties of Greensville, Brunswick, Lunenburg, Dinwiddie, Prince George, Surry, Southampton, Isle of Wight, and, indeed, all the counties from Sussex to the seaboard, between the James river and the North Carolina line, besides in several counties of that State. Sometimes I labored under the patronage of the General Association, and at other times as an independent evangelist. One year I preached monthly as a quasi-pastor, at Mill Swamp church, in Isle of Wight county, to large congregations. Of the results of my desultory labors I can form no estimate. During my residence in Sussex an interesting revival occurred at High Hills, by which many disciples were added to the church and the members were greatly refreshed.

My stay in the county was attended with very important consequences to me. It gave such opportunities for reading and studying as I had not before enjoyed. Elder Chambliss had a small but well-selected library, and I was enabled to buy such books as I most needed. Of these advantages I diligently availed myself. When I was at home, especially in the winter seasons, I read and studied with an unquenchable thirst

for knowledge. I devoured Dwight's Theology, Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History, and many other volumes of real merit. Probably in no equal period of my life did I acquire so much useful knowledge or contribute so largely to my habit of studying as during my sojourn in Sussex.

On the 4th of May, 1824, I was ordained to the work of the Christian ministry, at High Hills meeting-house, by Elders Nathaniel Chambliss and John D. Williams. It was to me an occasion of deep and solemn interest. In the morning I read, on my knees, the epistle of Paul to Timothy with earnest attention, that I might understand the weighty responsibilities I was about publicly to assume. At that time not more than two or three Baptist ministers in the State received salaries adequate to their support. I solemnly resolved before God that, so long as I should receive the necessaries of life by preaching, I would give myself wholly to the ministry. The sermon on the occasion was preached by Elder Williams, from Matt. xxiv: 45: "Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?" Of the services, after the lapse of more than half a century. I remember but little. The ordaining prayer was offered, as I suppose, by Elder Chambliss. That it was sincere and fervent I have no question, but in what measure I have been indebted to it for my usefulness in life only God knows. I desire to record that, in a period of more than fifty-four years, I have maintained inviolate the solemn pledge I made on the day of my ordination, and though my labors have been mostly among a plain, poor people, and my earthly supplies have often been meagre, I have never known want or been hindered in my appropriate work by secular care.

I never considered Sussex my permanent home. I was not pastor of any church, but merely the assistant of Elder Chambliss in the pastorate of two small country churches. In the spring of 1826 I deemed it my duty to leave my pleasant Sussex home. On the morning of my departure I read, at family worship, the twentieth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles. There

was some similarity between the separation of Paul from his Ephesian brethren and my departure from my Sussex friends, especially in the fact that I "kneeled down and prayed with them all and they all wept sore." The venerable Chambliss I saw no more. After a few years of absence I visited his home, and had the melancholy pleasure of standing by his grave and calling to grateful remembrance his paternal kindness to me in years past. Sister Chambliss I saw but two or three times after I ceased to dwell in her house. She lived several years, filled up her life with deeds of charity and devotion, and was peacefully dismissed to enter into the enjoyment of her eternal reward.

## XXV.

#### THE PORTSMOUTH ASSOCIATION.

IN May, 1824, the Portsmouth Baptist Association held its anniversary in the town of Portsmouth, where it was organized in 1791. I then resided in Sussex county, and accompanied the venerable Chambliss to the meeting. We made the journey by private conveyance, and shared in the hospitality of the brethren by the way. The Association convened in the Baptist church, a framed building, on or near the spot where now stands the neat and comfortable Baptist worship-house. Rev. David M. Woodson, from Campbell county, Va., was the pastor of the flock. Doctor Bowers, a layman of fine appearance, polished manners, and great intelligence, was moderator of the body. Jacob Darden (reverend, I think he was, though from age and feebleness of health he preached but little) was clerk of the Association. He was tall, spare, and of venerable appearance. He was the Nestor of the body, and would have been considered wise, discreet, and excellent in any assembly of intelligent, good men. The prominent ministers of the Association were, beside those already named, Chambliss, Murrel, Sherwood, Cornelius, and Brown. The meeting was remarkable for the number and ability of laymen who took part in its business. Besides the moderator, I remember Josiah Holliman and Benjamin Griffin, all of whom, at one time and another, were members of the State Legislature. Among the visiting ministers whom I call to mind were Richard Poindexter, the father of the late Dr. A. M. Poindexter, and William H. Jordan, the half-brother of the Doctor, from Bertie county, North Carolina.

Of the proceedings of the Association I recollect nothing, except a discussion on the validity of Pedobaptist immersions. In this conflict I fleshed my youthful sword, and was ingloriously defeated. I had associated with Semple, A. Broaddus,

and others among the fathers who maintained the validity of such baptisms, and had adopted their views. As this side of the subject seemed to be feebly supported, I ventured, with probably more courage than discretion, for the first time in my life, to engage in religious controversy. My rashness evoked the chastising rod of Richard Poindexter. He was about fifty years old, of medium size, of swarthy complexion, possessed of a mind remarkable for astuteness and great self-possession and readiness in extempore debate. Dr. Poindexter, with greater culture and more breadth of mind, bore a strong intellectual resemblance to his sire. It may reasonably be supposed that I was overmatched in the debate. I remember but a single illustration in the speech of Elder Poindexter. "Roundness," he said, "is essential to a bullet; beat it flat, and it will cease to be a bullet. So certain things—an authorized administrator among them-are essential to baptism, and without these things it is not baptism." I made, so far as I can recollect, no attempt to reply. The Association decided by an overwhelming vote that Pedobaptist immersions are not valid baptisms. I was defeated, but not convinced.

William H. Jordan was the central object of attraction at the meeting. He was nineteen years old, a widower, of pleasing appearance and manners, possessed of an ample fortune, had just been converted and baptized in a most extraordinary religious revival which prevailed in Bertie and the contiguous regions, and had entered the ministry coetaneously with his baptism. He preached in the Baptist church in Portsmouth, at night, to a crowded audience. His text was Eccl. xii: 1: "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth." Considering his age and inexperience, it was a remarkable sermon. It was less pathetic and winning than the best efforts of Daniel Witt, but certainly equal, and probably superior, to them in fluency and in brilliancy of illustration. I went immediately from Portsmouth to the first anniversary of the General Association, in Lynchburg, and reported that I had heard a young preacher in Portsmouth who was destined to be a rival of Whitefield in pulpit eloquence.

On the Sunday of the Association I preached for Brother Cornelius, in the Cumberland-street church, Norfolk, from the text, Rom. v: 1: "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Of the sermon I retain no remembrance, except that it was delivered with freedom and pleasure, and secured words of approval and encouragement from the pastor.

This visit was to me an event of great interest. I had never before been so near the seaboard. The ships in the harbor and the navy-yard excited my wonder. At this time I made my first steamboat voyage. A small steamer conveyed me from Norfolk to Old Point Comfort, through Hampton Roads, which to my inexperienced eyes seemed to be an inland sea. At this time, or on some occasion shortly afterwards, I was at the Point with Major-General Gaines. He had greatly distinguished himself in the war then not long passed. He was above the ordinary human height, but slender, well formed, of martial appearance, and in full military dress. He was received with great honor and display. A salute was fired, the military were paraded and passed under review, and all eyes were turned to him with admiration.

Nothing, however, so deeply impressed me as Potter's Field—the burying-ground of the army of the then recent war. It was a field far less extensive than those in which the soldiers who fell in battle or died in the late war are buried near this city, but it was covered with graves, occupied by the undistinguished dead who perished in the defense of their country, many of whom were my countymen, and a few of whom I had known in my boyhood. On visiting this repository of the dead, I fell into solemn and, I doubt not, profitable meditations on the brevity of life and the unutterable importance of the interests suspended on it. I well remember that on a board at the head of some poor soldier's grave was painted a stanza from a familiar hymn, which I cannot definitely call to mind, urging sinners to repent. I had often seen, read, and sung the verse, but never had it made such an impression on my heart as when I saw it amid the unhonored graves of the deceased soldiers.

The pleasure of my visit was greatly enhanced by my hospitable entertainment in the family of Dr. Schoolfield. A more pleasant and agreeable home I could not have had. For many vears the Doctor's house was known as the attractive resort of Baptist ministers visiting Portsmouth. He was an intelligent and successful physician, a genial companion, and a generous friend, but in some respects quite peculiar. He was morbidly conscientious. He had been for many years a Baptist, but whether he was then in communion with the Church I cannot say. He was upright, temperate, prudent, and universally respected, but he was constantly despairing of his salvation. No one doubted his piety but himself, and his doubts arose from his offenses, which to others seemed mere trifles. On one occasion he made me his father-confessor. He was in deep sorrow and gloom, and anxious to learn whether his salvation was possible. This was the cause of his trouble and despair: When he was a boy (he was now nearly sixty years old) a house was burned in the town of Portsmouth. He and other boys gathered the iron from the ruins, sold it for a trifle, and divided the money among themselves. It did not occur to him till many years afterwards that the act was a theft. He endeavored earnestly, but unsuccessfully, to find the person robbed, or his heirs, that he might restore the ill-gotten treasure. Failing in this effort, he paid to the mayor of the town a sum equal, as he supposed, to the amount which he obtained from the spoils, with interest down to the time of this settlement, to be distributed among the poor. Yet his mind was not at ease. He wished me to tell him whether I thought it was possible for him to be saved without making reparation to the persons injured by the theft. I do not call to mind the counsel which I gave him, but I was convinced that he needed physic more than instruction. No teaching can heal a mind diseased. I pitied but greatly admired the man against whom a morbid, sensitive, searching conscience could find no graver accusation, in a period of forty years, than a boyish indiscretion. The Doctor became later in life a confirmed hypochondriac, and died, I think, as he had lived, almost or quite despairing of salvation.

In view of such an affliction, how consolatory and cheering are the words of the Psalmist: "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him. For he knoweth our frame; he remembereth that we are dust."

# XXVI.

#### A MISSIONARY MEETING IN RICHMOND.

IN December, 1824, if I mistake not, I attended the annual meeting of a missionary society in this city. In those days the subject of missions was fresh and inspiring; a deep interest was felt in it from the comparatively recent return of Luther Rice from India, and his earnest sermons and appeals concerning it. Of the missionary meeting I can recollect but little. I have a vague impression that it was proposed to form a society to act throughout the State in behalf of foreign missions, as the General Association did in behalf of home missions; but the plan was not carried into effect till some years afterwards. Rev. Luther Rice, Dr. William Staughton, Rev. John L. Dagg, and I know not what other ministers, were present. My recollections relate mainly to Staughton and Dagg.

The sermon before the Missionary Society was preached by Brother Dagg. It was his first appearance in Richmond. He came, by invitation, from the county of Loudoun. twenty-eight years old; was a cripple from a recent fall, and walked on a crutch; was partially blind, and wore shades over his eyes; and his raiment was plain and rustic, like that of country ministers generally. He was rather tall and spare, and, had he been free from his infirmities, his appearance would have been quite commanding. The service was held on a week-day morning, in the old Second Baptist church, where the General Association was organized the year before. house was pretty well filled with an intelligent audience. what degree their expectation was excited, I did not know, or, at least, do not now remember. After the preliminary services were over, the preacher took for his text Rom. i: 14: "I am debtor both to the Greeks and to the barbarians; both to the wise and to the unwise." His manner was calm and slow; his voice was distinct and solemn; his style was pure, condensed,

and vigorous; his gestures were sparing but appropriate, and his thoughts were pertinent, weighty, and impressive. He aimed to prove that Paul was a debtor to the Greeks and barbarians, etc., not because of any kindness they had shown him, or any benefits which they had conferred on the world, but because a dispensation of the gospel had been committed unto him. Among his hearers was the ex-Governor of the State. Thomas M. Randolph. He stood not far from the pulpit, on the right hand of the speaker, with his shoulder turned towards him, and his eyes directed to the floor or the entrance to the church. Why he stood, I know not, as doubtless a seat was offered him; but stand he did, almost as motionless as a statue. Near the close of his sermon, Dagg, with his face turned to the wall, drew an imaginary and most graphic picture of a Druid priest, closing the description with the words: "This man is our father." The imperturbable Governor suddenly turned his head and gazed on the wall, as if to see the picture which had been so vividly drawn. The audience were spellbound by the sermon. They thought but little of the preacher, but much of the momentous truths which he had so clearly presented to their minds. I have rarely been so deeply impressed by a sermon. Some allowance must be made for my limited knowledge of preachers and of sermons; but I deemed it in style and manner the most unexceptionable of all the sermons which I had then heard. It was not impassioned, not powerful; but it was in good taste, and a most solemn and instructive discourse. Of all the discourses to which I was permitted to listen it exerted the greatest influence over my own manner of preaching. I fell into an unconscious and unavoidable imitation of his style, which, I am sorry to say, never gave any just conception of the original.

Dagg preached again on Sunday night, in the old First Baptist church, on the conversion of the thief on the cross. It was an admirable discourse, designed to illustrate and prove the sovereignty of God in the conversion of sinners. It was, perhaps, as well adapted to do good, but not so polished and graceful a sermon as his first. The two sermons established the

reputation of the preacher in Richmond.

Dr. Staughton was an Englishman by birth and education, but had resided long in the city of Philadelphia. He was probably the most popular Baptist preacher in the United States. His appearance clearly indicated his nationality. He was not tall, but corpulent, with well-formed features, a fine head, and bright, piercing eyes; was elegantly attired, and, on the whole, a very attractive person. At that time he was president of Columbian College, District of Columbia, then an institution exciting great interest and inspiring high hopes. He had been selected for the responsible position on account of his learning and his commanding influence.

The Doctor delivered his first sermon on this occasion at night in the First Baptist church. Of the congregation I remember nothing, but infer, from the reputation of the preacher and the interest of the occasion, that it was large. His text was: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." I remember but little of the sermon. I am convinced, from the reputation of the preacher, the excellence of some of his printed sermons which I read, and from the estimate of his ministrations formed by many of his intelligent admirers, that the discourse was sound, instructive, and well suited to be useful. I will give my impressions of it at the time, promising that proper deductions should be made for the immaturity of my taste. I was painfully impressed by the seeming affectation and pomposity of the preacher. His voice, his gestures, his reading, and his preaching, all appeared to be artificial and studied. I sat in front of him, and so offensive was his manner to my taste that I closed my eyes, and would have shut my ears had it been possible.

The Doctor preached again in the First church on Sunday morning, to a crowded audience, from the words: "For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eye-witnesses of his majesty." He drew a striking contrast between the heathen mythologies and the

evangelical history. One point of the contrast I distinctly remember. The mythologies were dateless: the evangelical history contained a minute statement of facts to establish its date. In confirmation of this last position he quoted Luke iii: 1-2: "Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Cæsar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of Iturea and of the region of Trachonitis, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene, Annas and Caiaphas being the high priests, the word of God came unto John the son of Zacharias in the wilderness." This passage surely bears no resemblance to a myth. The sermon was able, delivered in classic style, and in the usual manner of the Doctor. It seemed to me to be less affected than his previous discourse, but still strikingly stilted and formal. I was afterwards assured by Dr. R. B. C. Howell, who was a student and great admirer of Dr. Staughton, that my impression of his manner of preaching was quite common with persons who heard him only a few times, but that it was effaced with those who heard him frequently by his real earnestness and the solidity and splendor of his discourses.

It was a rare thing for two ministers, one of such elevated position, and the other of such prospective distinction, as Drs. Staughton and Dagg, to meet, in that day, in the city of Richmond. They were both heard with profound interest and admiration by the crowds which attended on their ministrations; but the country preacher, with his rustic appearance and unpretending manners, bore away the palm. That he should have done it before a Richmond audience was not strange. Sectional jealousy had no share in the decision—it had not then been quickened into activity; but sectional taste had probably much to do with it. The preaching of Dagg was of a style to which the citizens of Richmond had long been accustomed—a style plain, direct, and solemn, rather than imaginative, ornate, and grand. Quite probable it is that had the comparison been made between these pulpit orators in Philadelphia or Boston the judgment would have been reversed. We know from our own observation that the opinions of a community of the gifts of preachers are greatly modified by their training and the ministry to which they have been accustomed.

Dr. Staughton died in a short time after his visit to Richmond, and I never saw him again. He was in the full maturity of his mind, in fine health, with the promise of many years of usefulness, and favored with national and unsurpassed popularity, when he was cut down. His death was a loss to the Baptist denomination. Of Dr. Dagg I need say but little. His brilliant career, amid bodily infirmities and sufferings, is well known to the public. He has been equally distinguished by the clearness of his intellect, the purity of his taste, the extent of his knowledge, the value of his theological works, and his shrinking modesty. He still lingers on the shore of mortality, having passed his four-score years, waiting the call to cross the river and receive his crown.

In these eminent ministers we see the diversities of gifts with which God endows his servants, adapting them to different spheres of activity and to the diversified capacities and tastes of men; and it was a singular circumstance that Dagg, differing so widely from Staughton in culture and gifts, should have been selected as his successor in the pastorate of the Sansomstreet Baptist church, in Philadelphia, an office from which he retired to assume the presidency of Mercer University, Georgia.

# XXVII.

### ALEXANDER CAMPBELL.

I FIRST saw Mr. Campbell at the Dover Association, held at Upper Essex meeting-house, Essex county, Va., in October, 1825. His fame had preceded him. His debate on Baptism with Rev. William L. McCalla, a Presbyterian minister, had been pretty widely circulated, and produced the impression that he was a man of great learning and an invincible defender of Baptist principles. His preaching at several places in the upper counties of the State, as he approached the Association, had increased his reputation and the desire to hear him preach. He was thirty-six years old, above the ordinary height, rather spare, and not particularly attractive in appearance. There was a general desire at the Association to see him and to hear him preach.

John Bryce (if my memory is not at fault), John Kerr, and Alexander Campbell were appointed to occupy the stage on Lord's-day. The congregation, as usual on such occasions, was very large. Bryce preached first. Kerr, as was invariably the case, preached last, for the reason that no minister was willing to preach after him. Campbell delivered the second discourse, which, in those days, was generally considered the post of honor. The sermon of Bryce was short, and made but little impression on the audience. Campbell had a favorable opportunity for displaying his powers. On a calm autumnal day a vast crowd was intent to hear the renowned stranger. After the lapse of more than half a century I can furnish but a meagre report of his discourse.

Mr. Campbell read the twenty-eighth chapter of Matthew, and took for his text the apostolic commission, verses 19, 20: "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you:

and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen." His sermon was not expository, but discursive. It contained nothing on the import of baptism or the subjects of the ordinance, but was a discussion of the methods of evangelizing the world in the apostolic age. He dwelt largely on the fact that the disciples, dispersed by the persecution that arose after the death of Stephen, "went everywhere preaching the word." He drew a graphic description of the conversations of the wandering disciples concerning the things which they had seen and learned in the city of Jerusalem, and the effects produced by them. The promise—"lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world"—he expounded as having exclusive reference to the apostles, and the "end of the world" as meaning the end of the age—that is, the lives of the apostles. The sermon was probably from an hour to an hour and a half in length, and was heard to the close with unflagging attention.

The impressions made by the discourse were quite diverse. The old and experienced Baptists generally shook their heads in disapprobation of it. It was not the kind of preaching to which they had been accustomed and by which they had been nourished. To them it lacked the marrow and fatness of the gospel. Semple, Broaddus, and the fathers of the Association stood in doubt of Brother Campbell. They saw that he had abilities which might be usefully employed, but his preaching was not distinctively evangelical. It was notable rather for what it concealed than for what it revealed. It might have been delivered by a Unitarian, or a mere formalist, without any incongruity. It was hoped, however, that association with Baptists and a more careful study of the Scriptures would soon correct any errors into which he had fallen. For my own part I was quite captured by the sermon. It contained food for thought, and my mind was so occupied by its speculations that I scarcely paid respectful attention to the preaching of Kerr, which immediatly followed it, though I had never heard him before. Some allowance must be made for my inexperience and my imperfect knowledge of the Scriptures. I was but

little more than twenty-three years old, and my theological training had been very defective. The discourse was new in its style, fresh in its matter, and well suited to interest the young and speculative.

The day after the close of the Association Mr. Campbell preached at Bruington meeting-house, King and Queen county. His text was I Corinthians xiii: 13: "Now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity." Of the sermon I remember nothing, except that it was of the same indefinite sort as the former. There was nothing to indicate whether he was a Trinitarian or a Unitarian, a Calvinist or an Arminian, a believer in spiritual or baptismal regeneration.

On the next day I travelled with him and several of the delegates to the Association from the neighborhood of Bruington to the city of Richmond. He rode in a buggy, having a daughter nearly grown with him. As I was on horseback I had a favorable opportunity of cultivating his acquaintance. I can recollect but little that occurred on the route, except a discussion we had on the subject of missions. It was then a fresh and stirring theme of conversation and of public discourse. Mr. Campbell was not avowedly opposed to missions, but he condemned all the methods of propagating the knowledge of the gospel then adopted by evangelical Christians. He believed. so far as I could understand and can now remember his views, that the progress of Christianity must be by a natural outgrowth. Men should teach their neighbors the word of God. and they in turn should communicate it to persons nearest to them, and thus it would gradually be spread throughout the world. His method of evangelization had been shadowed forth in his remarks at the Association on the labors of the disciples scattered by the death of Stephen. He maintained that the sending of missionaries to preach the gospel to the heathen was utterly futile. He compared it to an attempt to cut down a majestic oak with a pen-knife. I heartily dissented from his views, and we entered into an earnest discussion on the subject, which ended, as most discussions do, without any change of opinion. I know not what judgment he formed of

my arguments. I certainly received the impression that his were not invincible.

In Richmond he preached at night in the Second Baptist church, to a small congregation, assembled for the stated service, from Matthew xvi: 18: "And I say unto thee, that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." He maintained that the Church was founded on the doctrine expressed in Peter's confession: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." The sermon gave no uncertain sound as to his views of the character of Roman Catholicism.

Here I parted with Mr. Campbell, and saw him no more till he sat in the State Convention for amending the constitution, in 1829–'30. I spent a few days in Richmond during its session, but saw very little of him. He added nothing to his fame by his labors as a statesman. Some persons thought that he did not receive due respect in the convention, because he was a clergyman. It is more probable that his want of influence in the body arose from his lack of training in statesmanship and the speculative character of his mind. I have a vague recollection that in a speech before the convention he laid down a number of propositions, drawn from the Scriptures, which, whether true or false, were of little importance in drafting a State constitution.

Before I saw Mr. Campbell again great religious changes had taken place. His followers, or those who adopted his views, had been separated from the Baptist churches and organized into an independent denomination. I had written Campbellism Examined and Campbellism Re-examined. The Disciples held a meeting in Richmond some twenty years ago, and Mr. Campbell was present. I expressed to some of his friends my readiness to call on him as a matter of courtesy, if the call would be agreeable to him. Receiving the assurance that the courtesy would be accepted with pleasure, I visited him at his lodgings, in company with Dr. J. L. Burrows. We were received with civility, but with evident restraint. He was greatly changed in appearance since I first saw him. He was increased in flesh,

but bore the unmistakable marks of old age and growing infirmities. I had resolved that I would not refer to our past controversies, or to points concerning which we differed, but that, if he should introduce them, I would not plead on the defensive. He very soon alluded to these matters. His views, he said, had been misunderstood and misrepresented; he had been treated with great injustice. To these complaints I made no reply, but proceeded at once to say that he had propagated one doctrine which he owed it to himself, to his friends, and to the Christian world, to correct—it is, that baptism and regeneration in the Scriptures meant the same thing. On this subject our conversation turned. He did not retract the statement, but offered such explanation of it as may be found in his voluminous writings. It is, in substance, that baptism is not the whole, but the finishing act of regeneration; that there can be no regeneration without baptism. His explanation was as unsatisfactory to me as my criticisms were to him. With this discussion we closed our interview, with due courtesy without cordiality.

It may, perhaps, be proper for me to give briefly my views of the talents and character of Mr. Campbell. Due allowance should be made for the perversion of my judgment, which may have resulted from our long-continued controversy and sparring. We were earnest and sharp, but not bitter, in our discussions. I was never his enemy, and now that he is incapable of self-defense, I would surely do his memory no known injustice. Still, as he was a public man, and destined to exert no slight posthumous influence, I may speak of him with candor and caution.

Mr. Campbell was a man of learning, of much miscellaneous information, and of great readiness and fecundity of mind. His learning, as already stated, was various rather than profound, and his imaginative far exceeded his rationative power. There was, in my humble judgment, a screw loose in his mental machinery, which became more obvious as he grew older, and terminated in downright monomania. No writer within my knowledge ever repeated his thoughts so frequently, wrote so much that needed explanation, or so glaringly and often contradicted himself, as he did. This is all explicable on the supposition that he labored under an idiosyncrasy which was gradually developed into mental derangement. This supposition, too, vindicates him in making statements which could hardly have been made by a sound and well-balanced mind without guilt. With this ground of defense, I have no hesitation in expressing the opinion that he was a good man. His life was devoted to an earnest and fearless advocacy of principles which, in the main, were right. The supreme and exclusive authority of the Scriptures in religion, immersion the only baptism, and believers the only subjects of the ordinance, and church independence, are important doctrines which he held in common with Baptists, and most zealously defended. He wrote, too, many valuable articles on matters of faith and practice, along, we must think, with much that was visionary and erratic. With the exception of statements easily traced to a disordered imagination, his life was pure and in perfect harmony with the principles he espoused and spent his long life in defending.

# XXVIII.

# MY SOJOURN IN CAMPBELL COUNTY.

I NEVER considered my residence in Sussex county permanent. I was not a pastor of any church, and had no-prospect of being called to any pastorate in that region from which I could derive a support. In the spring of 1826 I was invited, through the influence of my venerable friend, Rev. Abner W. Clopton, to take charge of two small churches in Campbell county (Hill's Creek and Union Hill), and to preach statedly at two other places in their vicinity (the Grove and the Red House, where churches had not been formed), with a reasonable prospect of support. My residence in the county was short, and attended with few important consequences known to me. Some facts may be worthy of record.

Among my hearers at the Grove was Samuel Pannill, Esq. He was, in the true sense of the word, a Virginia gentleman. He was not highly educated, but was endowed with a masculine intellect, which was well stored with the fruits of reading and observation. He was a man of wealth, high social position, occupying a place in the State Board of Public Works, and exerting a wide influence, but was not a Christian. I havementioned him to record his testimony concerning Rev. John Leland. Mr. Pannill resided in Orange county, and attended on his ministry when Mr. Leland preached there. He asserted that he had never seen a minister that possessed so great a gift to attract and hold the attention of an audience as Mr. Leland had. Mr. Pannill's conversation abounded in illustrations of the attractiveness and power of the preacher's eloquence, and his testimony was in harmony with that of all the persons who heard him and have left their opinions on record.

In the winter of 1826-'27 I boarded in the family of Mr. Thomas Hamlet, in the western extremity of Charlotte county. It was one of the coldest winters which I have known in Vir-

ginia. The ice was more than a foot thick on the ponds. On one of the coldest days of the season I had an appointment to preach a dozen miles distant from my residence. I was undecided about making the trip, but ventured to attempt it. Finding the air so severe I turned back, but again changed my course. Five times, in my indecision, I rode over a portion of the road, but finally continued my journey to the place of my appointment. Almost frozen, I reached it, and found a small congregation awaiting my arrival. After becoming warm, I preached with unusual freedom and fervency. As the result of the sermon, a young lady present, of respectable connections, was awakened and converted. In the spring, at her father's residence, in a remote part of the county, I had the pleasure of baptizing her, in a neighborhood where Baptists and their principles were little known. I deemed it proper to preach on the subject of baptism. A lady present—of intelligent appearance, a stranger to me-became offended at my remarks. Her face was suffused and her eyes flashed with indignation. Perceiving her excitement, I instantly lowered my voice and made conciliatory remarks. Her passion abated, and I proceeded with my discourse. I had not advanced far before her wrath was kindled again, and I was compelled to resort to soothing words to allay it. Perhaps half a dozen times during the service her temper was aroused by my remarks, and as often I checked it by kind and softening words. I was careful to leave her in a good humor, but she had no conception, nor had any person present any knowledge, of the entire control I exerted over her feelings. More than seventeen years after this event I met the lady whom I baptized, in the State of Missouri, still maintaining and adorning her Christian profession. I have recorded this case mainly that ministers may be encouraged to prosecute their labors through difficulties. "In the morning sow thy seed, in the evening hold not thy hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good."

In the summer of 1826, the Appomattox Association was

held at the Rocks meeting-house, in Prince Edward county, near the residence of the venerable Phillip Matthews, pastor of the church, who died some years later, leaving a fragrant memory in all that region. I was present at the meeting, but remember little of its proceedings. Luther Rice, then in the zenith of his powers, was there. He was tall, large, well-proportioned, of ruddy complexion, and plain and careless in his dress. He was appointed, with Eli Ball and Daniel Witt, to preach on Lord's-day. A large assembly was gathered under an arbor. Rice preached first, and from the text, I Corinthians, i: 21: "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe." I had heard Rice preach before, and heard him frequently afterwards, but never did I hear him preach as he did on that occasion. He had not the grace of Andrew Broaddus nor the pathos of John Kerr, but his sermon was marked by a sublimity, a grandeur of thought, and a strength of expression which I have never heard excelled, and, I think, I have never heard equalled. The congregation were not melted, but were electrified, overwhelmed, filled with wonder, and on the point of breaking out in rapturous strains of praise. When Rice sat down the audience was under intense excitement. Ball and Witt made a great mistake in attempting to follow him. They were good preachers—capable of interesting and instructing almost any audience. Witt, especially, was remarkable for the uniformity of his preaching and the certainty of succeeding well on important occasions. Success, however, in contrast with the sermon of Rice was impossible. Both preachers made deplorable failures. As compared with the eloquence of Rice, their discourses seemed as the spurting of water from a cask in contrast with the falls of Niagara.

One matter brought before the Association I remember. Rev. Abner W. Clopton was a prominent, indeed, the leading member of the Association. He was the most devout, earnest, self-denying, and laborious minister that I have known. His piety, however, was gloomy and ascetic. Many things

approved, or at least tolerated, by other ministers, were fiercely condemned by him. He was an earnest anti-Mason. He offered a resolution in the Association not merely disapproving Masonry, but, if I recollect rightly, advising the expulsion of Masons from the churches. Rice was a Mason. He had, however, long ceased to attend the lodges. He was a nominal, not an active Mason. He did not encourage his brethren to unite with the order, but he was a defender of Christian liberty. When the resolution was offered he rose and expressed his cordial submission to the teaching of the Scriptures. Whatever they condemned he rejected. He proposed, therefore, that the mover of the resolution should attach certain Scriptures to it to show its divine authority. had not anticipated this opposition. He was profoundly convinced that Baptists should not be Masons, but to quote Scriptures in support of his opinion was not easy. After some delay, and to avoid discord, the resolution was withdrawn.

So far as I know no Baptist Association in Virginia has advised its churches to exclude Masons from their fellowship. With few exceptions, our ministers and the members of our churches generally have deemed it inexpedient and undesirable for Baptists to become Masons, but they have respected the rights and wishes of their brethren who have dissented from their views and united with the order.

My residence in Campbell did not continue a year. "It is not in man that walketh to direct his steps." I had previously been invited to settle in the Northern Neck, but had positively declined the invitation. My marriage, however, in that region, and the death of a resident pastor, which widened the field and increased the need of ministerial labor there, changed my purpose. I left my temporary residence, where I had formed many pleasant associations and had a fair prospect of usefulness, to live and labor in a field consecrated by the devotions, toils, and successes of Straughan and Lunsford, two of the most eminent Baptist ministers to whom Virginia had given birth.

# XXIX.

#### THE NORTHERN NECK.

THE peninsula between the Rappahannock and the Potomac rivers, bounded on the east by the Chesapeake bay, is called the Northern Neck, because it lies on the northern border of the State. It is distinguished as the birth-place of Washington, Madison, Monroe, the Lees, and other persons famous in American history. It was consecrated in my eyes as the abode and field of labor of Samuel L. Straughan and Lewis Lunsford, two Baptist ministers, who had left behind them a fragrant reputation. I was desirous to visit the region and occupy the pulpits honored by the presence and the ministration of these venerable men.

At the Dover Association, held in Essex county, in the year 1825, where I first saw John Kerr and Alexander Campbell, I met several brethren from Lancaster county, seeking a pastor for Morattico Baptist church. Through their solicitation, I made arrangements to visit them at the close of the year. On Christmas morning I left the city of Richmond, on horseback, in company with the late Rev. Addison Hall—not then a minister, but a member of the Virginia Legislature—who availed himself of the holidays to visit his family in Lancaster. There was nothing of special interest in the trip; but my arrival in the Northern Neck was an epoch in my life. It had no little influence on my destiny. The Neck was to be for some years the scene of toils, anxieties, pleasures, and sorrows which were to exert a moulding power over my character.

The first event that I remember after reaching the peninsula was a trifle that might well have been forgotten. Colonel Hall, on meeting one of his neighbors, said to him: "How are you, Mr. G.?" "About," he replied, "all to a bad cold." He was about, in spite of his cold, with no mark of disease upon

him. I afterwards found the expression common among a people quite remarkable for the purity of their English.

My first night in the Neck was passed at Merry Point, the residence of my honorable guide. Here I met for the only time Rev. Daniel Davis, of Fredericksburg, who was on a preaching tour through the peninsula. He was a brother of Elder John Davis, under whose ministry I had been awakened some years before in Bedford county; of medium size, about sixty years old, and of rather rugged appearance. He differed widely from his brother John in spirit, views, and manner of preaching. He was not opposed to missions, but held extreme Calvinistic doctrines, bordering on antinomianism. It was my misfortune to get into such a controversy with him as I had had, a few years before, with his namesake of Henry county. They bore, in many respects, a striking resemblance to each other. They were both endowed with vigorous minds, had small culture, held extreme doctrinal views, were leaders in their respective spheres, impatient of contradiction, and overbearing in debate. I had not proceeded far in the discussion before I was imperatively ordered by my antagonist to hush. The command was probably wise; and while I questioned his authority to issue it, I promptly obeyed it.

Here I was first introduced to Deacon Rawleigh Dunaway, the grandfather of Dr. Dunaway, of Fredericksburg, a man of peculiar and striking qualities—one of the warmest friends that I have had in the journey of life, and whom I shall have occasion to mention again.

My first sermon in the Neck was preached to a good congregation in Lancaster court-house, on the 1st day of January, 1826, from the text, if I mistake not, Phil. iii: 8: "Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord." Of the sermon and of the occasion I remember but little.

On this visit to the Northern Neck I spent several weeks, and preached at all the Baptist meeting-houses in Lancaster and Northumberland, at Farnham church, in Richmond county, besides in several private houses. The trip was to me, on

various accounts, interesting and pleasant. The people were hospitable, kind, and sociable. I formed an acquaintance with many brethren notable for their intelligence, piety, and usefulness-disciples of Straughan and Lunsford, whose memories were redolent in all the region. Few could remember Lunsford, but anecdotes of the sermons, sayings, and deeds of Straughan dwelt on almost every tongue. He must have possessed a rare power of impressing his hearers. I have seldom conversed with a man who heard him preach that did not remember his text, his manner of treating it, and many of his illustrations and remarks. Yet I never talked with a man who had heard both Straughan and Lunsford preach that did not give the preference to the latter. In judging, however, of their comparative abilities, it should be remembered that the witnesses heard Lunsford in their youth, while their judgments were immature, and heard Straughan in their maturity, when their taste was refined and their acumen was sharpened by exercise. They were both extraordinary men for their times and their circumstances. With small advantages for mental culture, and few sources of religious information, they became, through the native vigor of their minds, their studious habits and their close observations, preachers of rare eloquence, power, and success, who would have adorned the pulpit in any land and in any age. I drank in with delight the stories of their labors and achievements, and deemed it an honor to preach in the pulpits which they consecrated, and to the congregations which once sat under their enrapturing ministry.

After I had spent a short time in the Neck I was invited to the pastorate of Morattico church. Its membership had been much reduced since the days of Straughan, but it was still a respectable body, containing many estimable members. I promptly declined the call, for three reasons: First, the region was isolated, having in those days, before it was visited by steamboats, but little intercourse with the rest of the world. It was then quite a trip to get beyond the limits of the peninsula. Secondly, I feared the malarial diseases more or less prevalent every autumn. The apprehension was not imaginary.

After my settlement there I had several sharp and protracted biliary attacks. Thirdly, the country was in an impoverished and depressed condition. It had not recovered from the injuries inflicted on it by the then recent war with Great Britain. Perhaps no portion of the United States had suffered more severely from the conflict than the Northern Neck. The enemy kept a large and unresisted fleet in the Chesapeake bay during the war, and the Neck was bordered on three sides by deep, navigable water, and intersected by many bold and undefended streams. It was entirely at the mercy of the enemy, and they made good, or rather bad, use of their irresponsible power. A large number of slaves was enticed away, many valuable dwellings were reduced to ashes, the country was pillaged, and the inhabitants lived in constant dread of arrest or spoliation. Many of the best and most thrifty settlers, unwilling to live in such constant peril and alarm, sold their lands, at greatly reduced prices, or left them without tenants, and removed to the upper country. The Neck was slowly recovering from the evils inflicted upon it by the war, but it was far from being what it was in the favored times of the past, or what it became a few years afterwards.

From these considerations, I deemed it my duty and my interest to decline the invitation so kindly extended to me. I left the Neck, with many regrets, to return to my Sussex home. My removal to Campbell county soon followed. I had no expectation of residing in the peninsula. thoughts are not as our thoughts, neither are our ways his ways. Already influences were in operation which changed my purpose. These influences I need not detail. After my short stay in Campbell, I removed, in the autumn of 1827, to the Northern Neck, and I was installed pastor of Morattico Baptist church, at Kilmarnock meeting-house, in Lancaster county. It was organized in the year 1778 by Lewis Lunsford, who continued his pastorate till near the close of the century, when he was succeeded by Elder Jacob Creath for a few years, and afterwards by Straughan, who was my immediate predecessor. The sermon on the occasion of my installation was

preached by Rev. Eli Ball, of Henrico county. I do not remember the sermon or the text, but they were deemed appropriate to the occasion, and the services made a fine impression on the large congregation in attendance. This was really my first pastorate. I was neither in form nor in fact pastor of churches in Campbell. One was, I think, under the pastorship of Elder Johns, and the other was a small body which I served as a stated preacher only for a few months.

### XXX.

### CHANGES IN THE NORTHERN NECK.

IT had been more than six years from the death of Straughan before I became pastor of Morattico church. During this time a great change had taken place in the religious condition of the community. The pulpit had been only occasionally, and not very profitably, supplied with preaching. Wicomico church, in Northumberland county, had called to the pastorate a young man, Rev. Eli S. Patterson, who died in a short time, leaving the church entirely destitute of the regular ministrations of the Word. At the death of Straughan the churches were large, prosperous, and aggressive, but in half a dozen years, receiving no accessions, they had been greatly reduced in numbers by deaths, removals, and apostasies, and in efficiency by the lack of instruction and leadership.

The Northern Neck was included within the limit of the Baltimore Methodist Conference, one of the ablest and best organized of all their conferences. It sent strong, earnest, and active ministers into the counties rendered vacant by the death of Straughan. They penetrated every nook and corner of the country, and wrought a great revolution in the religious views and preferences of the people. A very large majority of the population became Methodists, or were brought under Methodist influence.

I commenced my labors in the Neck under great disadvantages. Not only were the Methodists exerting a preponderating influence, but preach when or where I might, my appointment was almost sure to be in conflict with some Methodist meeting. They, too, had almost invariably something to attract a congregation beyond the simple merits of their preachers. Sometimes circuit-riders would be preaching their introductory and sometimes their valedictory sermons. Quarterly meetings,

camp-meetings, and other extraordinary services filled up almost every Sunday and constantly attracted the crowd.

One circumstance was much in my favor. Baptists were comparatively few, but they were mostly of excellent quality. They were gold tried in the fire. The unstable and the unprincipled had been carried away as chaff before the wind; but the sincere, the firmly grounded, and the devout remained as the well-winnowed wheat. The Wicomico church was soon included in my pastorate, and no bishop ever had more confiding, affectionate, earnest, and efficient helpers than I had.

I remained in the Northern Neck to the beginning of the year 1836—a little more than nine years. It was probably the most important period of my life. A great and striking change took place in the field of my labor during this period. I baptized about one thousand persons, nearly an equal number of whites and of negroes. Among the whites were many of the most intelligent, respectable, and influential persons in the counties of Lancaster and Northumberland. My congregations became large, and were intelligent and respectful, as well as respectable. Long before I left that region it was a matter of indifference to me what new or old circuit-rider or popular presiding elder was to preach in the vicinity of my meetings. My congregations could not be materially diminished.

I may mention a fact illustrative of the change which had taken place. During my residence in the Neck I was sued for slander. Of all the events of my life it seemed to be most promotive of my interests. I need not give the details of the case. The suit was brought on a misconception. I had not slandered the plaintiff, but, if opportunity had offered, would have shown him favor. There was, however, great excitement in the community on the subject—some favoring and some condemning me. For my own part, I was thoroughly mortified and humbled. I have never prayed so earnestly, never preached so pathetically, and never labored so dilligently as during that season of trial and anxiety. Inquiry and a candid statement of the cause of offense turned the public sympathy in my favor. A great religious revival ensued. I

baptized a large number of the inhabitants of the county. When the trial came on at Northumberland Courthouse no jury could have been summoned indiscriminately the half of whom would not have been Baptists. The clerk and sheriffs were Baptists. The judge directed the high sheriff, some of whose family I had recently baptized, to summon a jury that should have no Baptists on it. Faithfully, no doubt, he performed the service, but summoned three or four persons whom I expected to baptize at my next meeting in the neighborhood. The suit broke down from the failure of the plaintiff to prove the statements in his declaration; but had he been entitled to damages the jury would have been under a strong bias against awarding them.

Several causes contributed to the success of my ministrations in the Northern Neck. Among these I may mention my permanent residence among the people. The circuit-riders were mostly intelligent, pious, and attractive preachers, but they were comparatively strangers. They did not remain on their circuits long enough to become intimate with the people. While their preaching had the attractiveness of novelty, they lacked the influence secured by friendship and intimacy. I met the people at their court-houses, took part in measures designed to promote their secular interests, visited them at their homes, sympathized in their afflictions, rejoiced in their prosperity, and, in short, became identified with them in interest. They considered me, not only as a Christian pastor, but as a fellow-citizen concerned with themselves in the permanent welfare of the country. In deciding whether they would attend my ministry or that of a stranger, if their religious principles were not settled, they were usually governed not so much by a regard to talents or novelty as by friendship and by sectional partiality. I became convinced that in rural districts at least an itinerant ministry cannot successfully compete with settled pastors of equal gifts and activity.

It is also proper to state that my success in the Northern Neck was largely due to the aid that I received from visiting ministers. The camp-meetings, of which notice will be taken in future articles, and other protracted religious services, in which I was assisted by ministers of rare gifts for usefulness, had a large share in building up the churches and turning public sentiment in favor of the Baptists.

The period of my residence in the Northern Neck was probably the time most potential in the formation of my character and the development of my gifts-of which, by the way, I have no cause to boast. I had full scope for the exercise of my powers. I labored diligently and faithfully, and never preached a sermon which I did not think I could excel, and which I did not earnestly endeavor to excel. By such reading as my desultory and constant labors would permit, by diligent studies (performed chiefly on horseback or in a sulky), and by the frequent exercise of my gifts, I made such attainments in knowledge and in the art of employing it usefully as I could. mention these facts for the encouragement of young men who, thirsting for knowledge that they may be useful, with small opportunities for its acquirement, may find some inspiration in my example.

In the autumn of 1835 I was invited to the pastorate of the First Baptist church, of this city. The honor was by me unsought and unexpected. I have made a few changes in my ministerial life, and usually with great anxiety, doubtfulness, and sorrow. I accepted, after a short delay, the invitation to settle in Richmond without a lingering doubt of the propriety of the measure. During my residence in the Northern Neck two young men had been called into the ministry and solemnly ordained to the work—Col. Addison Hall and Dr. William H. Kirk—the latter baptized by me and the former by Straughan. They were men of piety, culture, useful gifts, and high respectability. They were well fitted to occupy the field in which I was laboring; but while I remained in it, being older in the ministry and pastor of the churches, it was not probable that their talents would be fully developed or successfully employed. It was more convenient for me to change my location than it was for them. I followed the leading of Providence, and never have had cause to regret my course. Hall and Kirk became

pastors of the churches, and accomplished a greater amount of good than would probably have been effected had I continued

in charge of them.

My firm conviction that I should leave the Northern Neck did not prevent my removal from being a trying and sorrowful event. Most of the members of the churches I had baptized. I had received from them the kindest and most brotherly treatment. If there was a man, woman, or child in all my congregations, except one, who was not opposed to my leaving, I did not know it. That one was Deacon Thomas S. Sydnor, among the truest and most devoted of all my friends. Under all the circumstances, he gave it as his opinion, in opposition to the warmest feelings of friendship, that it was my duty to accept the call in Richmond. To add to the trial, the change involved the necessity of leaving the grave of my first wife and breaking in a measure the tender ties of my second to her family and the place of her nativity.

In this article I have given to myself a prominence by no means congenial to my feelings. It is not easy, however, for one to dissociate his recollections from himself. I will endeavor in my future numbers to keep as free from egotism as is compatible with a fair statement of my recollections.

## XXXI.

## NORTHERN NECK CAMP-MEETINGS.

THE year 1831 is memorable for the number, power, and extent of the revivals among the Baptist churches in Virginia. During the summer I aided Rev. James B. Taylor in a series of meetings held in the Second Baptist church, Richmond, the fruits of which were abundant and very valuable. I was desirous that brethren Taylor and Kerr should assist me in meetings in the Northern Neck. A camp-meeting having been recently conducted in Halifax county, I think, with great success, they proposed if the brethren in the Neck would prepare for holding a camp-meeting to attend it. On my return I laid the proposal before the churches. They greatly desired a visit from the ministers—especially from Kerr, of whom they had heard much, and few of them had seen; but against a camp-meeting they had earnest objections. It had long been an annual meeting among the Methodists, and conducted, as was supposed, with many extravagances. Between the desire for a visit from Kerr and Taylor, and the aversion to a campmeeting, the brethren were much perplexed and divided. As the discussion of the subject added to the confusion, it was agreed that the question should be decided by lot. After earnest prayer for divine guidance, the lot was cast, and the decision was in favor of the meeting. All promptly acquiesced in it.

The meeting was held near Lancaster Courthouse, at a place called Ball's Woods, where the Methodists had made permanent arrangements for their annual camp-meeting. At the appointed time quite a fair proportion of the members of Morattico and Wicomico churches were on the ground prepared for the services. True to their appointment, brethren Kerr and Taylor, accompanied by Rev. Eli Ball and other ministers, made their appearance. The situation was so singular and so

much at variance with the views and tastes which had long prevailed among the brethren that they could scarcely look one another in the face without laughing. There had been much prayer for the success of the meeting. A few were hopeful, many were in doubt, and some predicted an utter failure. The first service was held, I think, on Friday afternoon. I do not remember who preached, but there was nothing remarkable in the sermon. At its close persons were invited to come forward for prayer. About twenty inquirers accepted the invitation, most of them heads of families, and several of them among the most respectable and influential members of the community. Instantly all doubt of the success of the meeting vanished, and from that moment the hearts, tongues, and hands of all the brethren and sisters were united to promote its interests. I have never seen a meeting open with such cheering prospects of success. It proceeded with increasing interest until Saturday night.

At this time a rain commenced which, for its abundance and duration, probably exceeded any that I have ever known. was a young flood. The roads were converted into streams, the streams were swelled into rivers, the mills were swept away, and the whole country was covered with water. The encampment was not prepared for such a deluge. The cabins leaked like riddles, and the water ran in a great sluice through the camp. To keep dry was impossible. The beds, bed-clothing, and raiment of the people were all moistened or saturated by the rain. All religious services at the stand were suspended, and those held in the tents were greatly interrupted. It was a notable fact that among the persons encamped on the ground were some in delicate health who could not bear without injury, as they supposed, the slightest exposure to inclement weather. They could not leave the place, and were compelled to fare like the rest. They slept between wet sheets, and were constantly exposed to the pitiless storm. Their death was judged to be inevitable, but not one of them, so far as I could learn, suffered any damage from the exposure, and some of them were decidedly benefited by it.

One remarkable preservation deserves to be recorded. There was a wide-spreading oak near the preachers' stand, around which, when the weather would permit, a crowd was constantly assembled. At a time when it was not raining the tree was struck and barked by a flash of lightning. Not an individual was hurt. The flash occurred at the dinner hour, when all were drawn from the lounging place. At another time a dozen or twenty lives might have been destroyed.

The rain continued to the close of the meeting, but its results were most cheering. About forty-five persons professed conversion; but the importance of the meeting was to be estimated by the quality rather than the number of the converts. Scarcely any of them were children or youth, more than twenty were heads of families, and half a dozen were prominent citizens. They resided in different portions of the Neck, and exerted a mighty and beneficent influence so long as I remained there.

One case is entitled to special notice. John Grinstead, of Northumberland, was, in several respects, a remarkable man. He was more than six feet high, weighed upwards of three hundred and fifty pounds, and had the strength of an ox. He was a good-natured, genial, pleasant companion, full of all manner of pranks and mischief. In comfortable worldly circumstances, he devoted himself to amusements, and was a ringleader in all kinds of sports and frolics. He was not intemperate, but far from being a teetotaler. He was not specially wicked, but his influence was decidedly hostile to piety. No man in the county had more or warmer friends than Grinstead. He had recently lost a pious daughter, who, on her dying bed, had pleaded with him to become religious, and had probably secured from him the pledge that he would attend to the interests of his soul. He appeared at the meeting at its commencement, though residing at a distance of more than twenty miles from it, was among the first to come forward for prayer, and was joyfully converted before the close of the meeting. The news of his conversion spread rapidly through the Neck, and an earthquake would scarcely have produced a greater

sensation. I have never known an instance of conversion the moral effects of which were more obvious, wide-spread, and momentous than was that of Grinstead. Nobody doubted his sincerity. No feeble power, it was universally conceded, could have wrought so great a change in one so devoted to pleasure and dissipation as he was. As an army becomes demoralized and panic-stricken when a great general falls at the commencement of a battle, so the devotees of pleasure and the sons of frolic and fun were terrified and lost heart when Grinstead, their leader, deserted their cause and enlisted under the opposing banner. In a short time I baptized him in Coan river, where there was much water for the purpose, and to the end of his life he continued an earnest, upright, and consistent Christian.

This meeting, held under almost unparalleled disadvantages, slew all the prejudices against camp-meetings among the Baptists in the lower end of the Northern Neck. Those who had most stoutly opposed it became its warm friends. It was seen that, conducted under favorable circumstances, and with proper order and prudence, by ministers commanding the respect of the community and wielding an influence over it, it was eminently adapted to be useful. It was at once resolved to have a camp-meeting the next year, provide ample accommodation for families and guests, and guard against the discomforts of the present meeting.

This camp-meeting gave a strong impulse to the Baptist cause in the Neck. The converts were about equally divided between Morattico and Wicomico churches. Their baptism at different places awakened a lively interest and inspired the brethren and sisters with fresh zeal in the Master's cause. It was the commencement of a new era among the Baptists of that region, and led to the adoption of more extended plans for the promotion of their cause.

One event must not be overlooked. At this meeting Henrietta, daughter of the late Rev. Addison Hall, afterwards Mrs. Shuck, the first American female missionary to China, was converted. She had just returned from a school in Fredericks-

burg to pass her vacation at home. She was among the first converts at the meeting. Her convictions of sin were pungent, her feelings intense, and her deliverance joyful. She ascribed her first permanent religious impressions to a question propounded to her by her pious teacher, Mrs. Little: "Where will you be a hundred years hence?" It awakened in her bosom serious meditation, a sense of accountability to God, and a conviction of her guilt and danger, which, by the divine blessing, led her to repentance and prepared her for a happy reception of the gospel. She commenced on the camp-ground, among her young associates, the evangelical work which, with constantly increasing fervor and fidelity, she continued to the close of her eventful life. She was baptized at Waverly, the family residence in Lancaster, in the presence of a deeply impressed audience. In her last letter, written from China a few hours before her death, she referred with pleasure to this solemn act of her life: "Twas you, my dear Brother Jeter, who led me into the liquid grave. Oh! how well I remember that day, that precious day, and the dear friends (some, yea, many of them, now departed—1844) who accompanied me to the water's edge."

### XXXII.

# NORTHERN NECK CAMP-MEETINGS.

WE have already stated that the brethren resolved at the first camp-meeting to hold a second. The ground selected for it was nearly equidistant from the court-houses of Lancaster and Northumberland, and not far from the line dividing them. It was in a primeval forest and on a ridge, at the foot of which there was a bold and perennial spring. Neither expense nor pains were spared in preparing the encampment. It was a square. On one side of it were the preachers' tent and the stand for preaching. In front of the stand were arranged seats for the accommodation of a large congregation. Around the square were erected substantial, water-proof cabins, suited to the warm summer weather. Quite a large assembly could find comfortable lodgings on the ground.

The meeting was anticipated with great hopefulness and no little anxiety. Kerr, Taylor, and many other ministers were present at it. Of its services and progress I remember but little. One scene, however, I distinctly recollect. vices had been going on some time, and the prospects were not very bright. The morning prayer-meeting was addressed by Kerr. He was in his best mood, and delivered an overwhelming exhortation. He urged the brethren to retire to the surrounding forest and make private and importunate prayer for the conversion of their friends. At the close of the service the brethren, greatly affected and moved by the appeal, dispersed in every direction, singly and in small companies, to present their prayers to God. For hundreds of yards around the encampment the forest resounded with the low, solemn voice of supplication. Persons coming to the meeting, retiring from it, or going into the forest for any purpose, could not avoid the sound of prayer. A solemn and earnest tone of piety was imparted to the meeting, and it proceeded with unabated interest and power to its close.

At the termination of the meeting all who had found peace in believing since its commencement were requested to come forward and occupy appropriated seats. About one hundred and forty promptly presented themselves. Of these ninety were males, most of them of mature age, many of them heads of families, and several of them persons of prominence and influence in the community. Most of these, in a few weeks, were baptized and became members of the contiguous churches, adding much to their strength and efficiency, as well as to their numbers. Nor do these statements indicate the full results of the meeting. The converts who came forward on the invitation were not all the trophies of grace secured by the services. Some of them had left before the close; others, cherishing hope, lacked confidence to present themselves as subjects of grace, and not a few had received impressions which ripened in after times into piety. The close of the meeting was a most inspiring scene, and indicated as large a measure of success as I have ever known to follow a week's religious services.

While I continued in the Northern Neck a meeting was held every year on the camp-ground described above, with varying, but always with gratifying, success. The meeting of 1834 deserves special attention. In that year the Congregational Union of England and Wales sent Drs. Andrew Reed and James Matheson to visit their brethren in this country. Reed, to extend his inquiries and make observations on the religious condition of the country, attended the Baptist campmeeting of the Northern Neck. He was one of the most eloquent and popular of the dissenting London pastors. He was in the prime of life, of medium height, rather corpulent—an unmistakable Englishman, but fairer and of more delicate appearance than his countrymen usually are. His dress, manners, and conversation gave proof of his intelligence and refinement. His arrival awakened a lively interest in the congregation and in the surrounding country. He was invited to preach, and somewhat reluctantly consented to do so, for he was fatigued from travelling and had been much broken of his rest.

A large congregation was assembled to hear him. The

weather was propitious. Everything was favorable to a pleasant service. Earnest prayer had been offered for the divine blessing on it, deep solemnity pervaded the audience, and all were intent to hear a London preacher. At eleven o'clock A. M. the Doctor arose in the stand and took for his text Acts iii: 19: "When the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." Of the matter of the sermon I remember but little, but of its manner and effect I have a vivid recollection. It was delivered without vociferation, but in a clear, well-sustained voice, growing more earnest and tender from the beginning to the end. It was not profound, not sublime, not overpowering; but it was pertinent, plain, eloquent, evangelical, impressive. I have heard greater sermons, but rarely a more faultless and fascinating one. It was heard throughout the large assembly with almost breathless attention, with a deepening interest and few tears, but with a strong undercurrent of feeling. At the close of the sermon a most remarkable scene occurred. I will allow the Doctor to describe it, as he drew the picture when its impression was fresh upon his mind, in his report to the body which had sent him to this country:

"There were not less than fifteen hundred persons assembled. Mr. Taylor offered fervent and suitable prayer. It remained for me to preach. I can only say that I did so with earnestness and freedom. I soon felt that I had the attention and confidence of the congregation, and this gave me confidence. I took care in passing, as my subject allowed, to withdraw my attention from anything noisy and exclamatory, and there was throughout the discourse nothing of the kind; but there was a growing attention and stillness over the people. The closing statements and appeals were evidently falling on the conscience and heart with advancing power. The people generally leaned forward to catch what was said. Many rose from their seats, and many, stirred with grief, sunk down, as if to hide themselves from observation; but all was perfectly still. Silently the tear fell, and silently the sinner shuddered. I ceased. Nobody moved. I looked around to the ministers for some one to give out a hymn. No one looked at me; no

one moved. Every moment the silence, the stillness, became more solemn and overpowering. Now here and there might be heard suppressed sobbing arising on the silence. But it could be suppressed no longer; the fountains of feeling were burst open and one universal wail sprung from the people and ministers, while the whole mass sunk down on their knees, as if imploring some one to pray. I stood resting on the desk, overwhelmed like the people. The presiding pastor arose and, throwing his arms around my neck, exclaimed: 'Pray, brother, pray! I fear many of my charge will be found at the left hand of the Judge! Oh, pray, brother; pray for us!' and then he cast himself on the floor with his brethren to join in the prayer. But I could not pray. I must have been more or less than man to have uttered prayer at that moment. Nor was it necessary. All in that hour were intercessors with God with tears and cries, and groans unutterable. So soon as I could command my state of feeling I tried to offer prayer. My broken voice rose gradually on the troubled cries of the people, and gradually they subsided so that they could hear and concur in the common supplications. It ceased and the people rose.

"Thus closed the most remarkable service that I have ever witnessed. It has been my privilege to see more of the solemn and powerful effect of divine truth on large bodies of people than many, but I never saw anything equal to this—so deep, so overpowering, so universal."—Christian Library, 640.

The above is a very fair account of the scene, except that, I think, the request for prayer by the pastor preceded the general outburst of feeling in the congregation. It was a very remarkable scene. I have observed deeper and more abiding impressions made on large audiences by the preaching of the gospel, but I have never seen so sudden and general and overwhelming an effect produced on a great assembly as occurred at the close of the Doctor's sermon. Its results it was difficult to estimate. The emotions produced were generally as transient as they were intense. The meeting was less successful than were those of previous years, but still its fruits called for great gratitude to

the Giver of all good. From fifty to seventy persons professed to find salvation through faith in Christ.

It may be proper for me to present my own views—the result of no inconsiderable experience—on the expediency of holding camp-meetings. They may be adopted wisely or unwisely, according to circumstances. In a sparsely settled country, under good religious influence, where the grounds and its surroundings are controlled by the friends of good order, where comfortable arrangements are made for the entertainment of an assembly, where public sentiment is sufficiently strong for the suppression of disorder, and where the ministers have gifts and influence for properly conducting such a meeting, it may, by God's blessing, be eminently useful. Some of the best, if not the very best, meetings which I have attended were campmeetings. There is, however, great danger-certainly in Virginia—that they will be perverted to evil. There is a strong tendency to make them occasions of social pleasure, festivity, and even of frivolity, dissipation, and vice. Satan usually attends camp-meetings, and musters and trains his servants for mischief, and much care, discretion, and firmness of purpose are needed to restrain the tendencies to evil.

## XXXIII.

#### A VOYAGE TO BALTIMORE.

URING my residence in the Northern Neck, and in the year 1829, I made a trip to the Monumental City. Then no steamer plied between that place and the Neck. The only communication between them was by sailing craft. I arranged to make the voyage in a small schooner engaged in the Baltimore trade. I had long desired to be in a storm on the water strong enough to give me a conception of its grandeur without arousing my fears. I got aboard the craft in the evening, and, not having fully recovered from an attack of malarial fever, went into the cabin, took my berth, and slept soundly until the next morning. To my surprise I learned that in crossing the mouth of the Potomac we had been in a severe storm, and that the vessel had been terribly rocked, if not in danger of being capsized. The skipper, who had been long engaged in navigating the Chesapeake bay, stated that he had never before encountered so rough a storm. Quite likely I enjoyed my sleep more than I should have enjoyed the howling of the wind and the dashing of the waves.

In two or three days' run we reached the city of Baltimore. To me it seemed a great city, containing about ninety thousand inhabitants. The few days I spent there were employed in traversing its streets, surveying its fine buildings, and examining its curiosities. I had often expressed the wish that I could meet myself, without knowing who I was, that I might form an impartial opinion of my appearance. Strangely enough, on this visit my desire was gratified. I went to Peale's museum. While I was employed in examining the curiosities in a large room, I observed a tall, gawky-looking man who was engaged with equal interest in inspecting objects in an adjoining room. I eyed him occasionally, but not very minutely. Having finished my examination in the room where I was, I concluded

that I would pass into the apartment where the stranger seemed to be intensely occupied. He had closed his inspection of the curiosities in his room and appeared to be making his way into mine. We met face to face, and it was some time before I could perceive that the stranger was my very self, reflected from a mirror that had been fitted in the wall and surrounded

by a frame appearing like a door.

I spent a Sunday in Baltimore. My first aim was to hear the Rev. John Finlay preach. He was then pastor of the First Baptist church, meeting in the round-house, on Sharp street, so long occupied by Dr. J. W. M. Williams. Mr. Finlay had the reputation of being a very eloquent preacher. Many considered him the equal of Summerfield, who had recently died, but who, while living, was a star in the Methodist pulpit of Baltimore. I had asked Luther Rice what sort of preacher Mr. Finlay was. He replied that he was such a preacher as a Scotchman would make. I inquired what sort of a preacher a Scotchman would make, and he answered that he would make a Scotch preacher. As his answers were equivocal, he illustrated them by a Western story. A witness was called to testify in a case of assault and battery. The accused had struck his opponent with a stone. The witness was asked the size of the stone, and replied that it was sizeable stone. The attorney requested him to state how big it was, and he answered that it was of certain bigness. The court, interposing, required him to compare it with something whose size was known, and he said it was the size of a piece of chalk. The explanation was quite as equivocal as the original answers. For some reason he declined to give me his opinion of the preaching abilities of Elder Finlay. He was a Scotchman, and some of the finest preachers of the present century have been Scotchmen. I heard him in his own pulpit on Sunday morning. His text was Eph. iv: 22-24: "That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind," &c. The congregation was not large, and the circumstances were not exciting, but I

can well judge, from the clearness, fluency, and correctness of his style, that under favorable conditions he preached with eloquence and power. This discourse, however, was graceful rather than profound, and pleasing rather than impressive.

At night I went to hear Elder E. J. Ries, who preached in a church on Calvert street. I had often heard of him. When I met Rev. Daniel Davis, on my first visit to the Northern Neck, he spoke in glowing terms of Elder Ries. He was the greatest man of God that he had ever seen. His talents were not appreciated in Baltimore. Elder Davis thought that he must remove to Baltimore to aid Brother Ries in his unequal conflict with false religious doctrines. From other sources I have learned that he was a high Calvinist, if not an Antinomian, and a leader of the Anti-mission party. He was a small man, and, when I saw him, quite beyond the meridian of life. congregation, on a pleasant evening, in a central part of Baltimore, numbered about twenty persons. His text was Matt. v: 20: "For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ve shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." The sermon was sound in the faith. Though the text did not demand it, he discussed the high points of Calvinism with intense earnestness, before an audience that was thoroughly indoctrinated, and had listened, no doubt, a hundred times to the same discussion. He was not discouraged, because he considered that as his congregation was diminished in size it was increased in purity and merit. Elder Davis, we learned, afterwards removed to Baltimore to assist Brother Ries in his labors, but it was not long before he discovered that his helper was unsound, and denounced him as an Arminian. Elder Davis returned to Virginia a wiser man, and quite changed in spirit. Elder Ries, by a most faithful ministry, as he deemed it, succeeded in annihilating the church—a result which, so far as I know, invariably follows the preaching of Antinomianism.

I may here mention a matter out of its chronological order. The Baptists in Baltimore being few, and their cause feebly sustained, Deacon William Crane, the founder and architect of the

Second Baptist church of this city, a few years from this time resolved to remove to Baltimore for the purpose of establishing a new church there. After the dissolution of Mr. Ries' church, the deacon purchased the house on Calvert street in which it met. I was invited to unite with him in the enterprise. decide the matter judiciously I made another trip to the Monumental City. I shared in the hospitality of Mrs. H., a venerable sister who sympathized with Brother Crane in his scheme. I preached to a small congregation in the Calvert-street house. Sister H. inquired, after the sermon, whether I was frightened. On being assured that I was not, she said she supposed that I was-that something was the matter with me, as I did not preach so well as she had expected. What was the measure of her expectation, or how it had been created, I knew not. I admired her frankness, but was in nowise discouraged by her disappointment, for I had learned that no sermon could be so excellent but that some persons would find fault with it, or so poor that others would not praise it. It was for some time undecided whether I should remove to Baltimore or remain in Virginia. Finally it was agreed to leave the question to the decision of a committee of ministers of the Dover Association, at its session with the Upper King and Queen church, in the year 1834. The committee decided adversely to my removal. Had their decision been otherwise, no human sagacity could conjecture what my history would have been.

I must mention the exhibition of a ventriloquist which I attended in Baltimore. Ventriloquism is a gift or art scarcely less wonderful than the phonograph of Edison. It is the power of not merely imitating sounds, but of making the voice seem to proceed from any point at the pleasure of the actor. The performer, whose name I do not remember, was surely a master of his art. Of all the exhibitions which I have attended it was the most amusing. There was nothing in it to offend the most fastidious taste or the most rigid piety. He carried on facetious conversations, in different voices, from different parts of the room, in a manner the most natural. A dialogue between a father and a petted son for the purpose of displaying the boy's

surprising genius, which resulted in a manifestation of his incurable stupidity, was exquisitely humorous, and a fine illustration of the delusion of fond parents as to the marvellous gifts of their children. The actor raised a window, and we seemed to hear the voice of a man at a distance on the street, approaching nearer and nearer. He appeared at length to be climbing a ladder to reach the open window. On approaching it a colloquy took place between him and the actor, terminating in a fierce quarrel, the violent shutting of the window, and the terrible screams of the imaginary sufferer.

I returned to my plain country home quite impressed with the greatness and grandeur of the Monumental City. It was certainly the most magnificent place that I had seen.

## XXXIV.

# VIRGINIA STATE CONVENTION OF 1829-'30.

I DID not see the Convention which framed our present State Constitution. It represented neither the intelligence, the property, the patriotism, nor the respectability of the Old Dominion. It was composed of Negroes, who scarcely knew for what they were appointed; adventurers, who illustrated the Scripture, "Wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles (vultures we call them) be gathered together"; and a few respectable Virginians, in a hopeless minority. I resided in the city during its session, but carefully avoided the sight of a body inseparably associated with the misfortune and degradation of my State.

The Convention of 1829–'30, assembled in this city for the amendment of the State Constitution, was in many respects a notable body. It was the most intelligent, patriotic, and venerable assembly that has ever met within the limits of the State, and rarely has it been excelled in these qualities in any age or in any country. It was my privilege to see this body and to attend several days on its sessions. My recollections of its men and measures may interest some persons.

It first met in the hall of the House of Delegates, and afterwards in the First Baptist church, on the ground now occupied by the First African church. I saw it in the legislative hall. It contained many men of national fame, some of them having participated in the revolutionary struggle and occupied the highest posts of honor. James Madison was there. He was about eighty years old, small of stature, with a pleasing countenance, and of dignified manners, but not of commanding presence. James Monroe, a few years his senior, was a larger man, a more notable person, but showing more clearly the infirmities of age. Judge Marshall, a few years younger than Madison, was tall, lean, bony, and loosely jointed, but quite

vigorous, and exhibiting nothing of the decadence of age. Among the distinguished men who followed close after the Revolution I may mention Littleton Waller Tazewell, William B. Giles, and John Randolph. Tazewell was a fine, venerablelooking man, of whom it was stated that Judge Marshall said: "His mind is as clear as light and as pure as ether." Giles was in feeble health, and bore the marks of disease rather than of statesmanship. Randolph was as singular in appearance as any man who could be found in a day's search. He was tall and slender; his body was short and his legs were unusually long; his head was small and seemed to be set on his shoulders, and his dress was uncouth. His presence, while it gave no promise of superior intelligence, would have attracted attention in any assembly. Prominent among the leaders of the Convention-men in the full vigor of life, and fired with the desire of distinction—were Leigh, Upshur, Broadnax, and the Barbours. I must not omit the name of Alexander Campbell, then rising into eminence. He was a Scotchman, well educated, exceedingly fluent, but on a theatre for which his training had not fitted him, on which his clerical profession was a serious obstacle to his success.

I have not attempted to give a full account of the distinguished members of the Convention. It was composed mainly of the most cultivated, respectable, and popular citizens from every district of the State. Demagogism had little share in their selection. The ablest judges, the most astute lawyers, the finest scholars, and the most successful men of business, without regard to their location, and with little respect to their wishes, were chosen to represent the good people of the Commonwealth and improve their antiquated Constitution.

On the Convention I attended several days, listening to the debates and making observations on its members. Judge Philip P. Barbour presided over the body with great efficiency and dignity. The most notable man in the body, or at least the member who made the deepest impression on my mind, and of whom I retain the most vivid recollection, was John Randolph of Roanoke. He was unquestionably the most perfect

orator to whom, in the course of half a century, it has been my privilege to listen. I have heard many of the most eminent speakers of the present age in this country, and some in Europe, in legislative halls and in pulpits, and I have not seen one who seemed so thoroughly to understand the art of public speaking as he did. I have probably heard speakers more profound in thought, more convincing in argument, and more moving in appeal, but none so faultless in speaking as was the orator of Roanoke. His voice was sharp and quite peculiar, but not unpleasing to the ear. His gestures were few, but all graceful and expressive. In the art of pausing he was unrivalled. He would throw together the clauses of a sentence exciting expectation, and before he would bring out its meaning, with his hand gracefully elevated, he would pause as if some thought too large for utterance were struggling to find expression. There was no doubt but that the sentence would be gracefully and forcibly finished. The delay intensified the desire to hear the conclusion. Every head was pressed forward and every eye was strained to mark the effect of the coming bolt. Nor was there any disappointment when it came. It went to the mark with unerring precision and with resistless force. His style was natural, clear, and strong, adapted simply to convey and press his thoughts.

Of his remarks in general I have no distinct remembrance, but I recollect one of his illustrations. He was discussing some matter before the Convention which he considered theoretical rather than practical. Jefferson, the orator said, constructed a plow on philosophical principles, whose mould-board presented the least possible resistance. He had tried it. All he could say of it was, that it was the hardest plow to draw that ever he had seen. The measure he was opposing seemed sound in theory, but it would, like Jefferson's plow, be difficult in practice.

In one case Mr. Randolph found a foeman worthy of his steel. Mr. Henderson—I think that was his name, and that he was from Loudoun county—had made some remarks for which the member from Charlotte deemed it proper to rebuke him.

"Et tu, Brute? This is too much," said the orator, "for one member of this House to say to another." He proceeded to rebuke the member from Loudoun in sharp terms for his unparliamentary language. As soon as Mr. Henderson could get the floor he said, in substance: "Mr. Speaker, I hope my inexperience and want of parliamentary training may excuse me for any seeming lack of courtesy to the members of this body. I am conscious of my need of a guide in parliamentary order and courtesy, but my observation has taught me that the member from Charlotte is not a proper model for my imitation." Mr. Henderson resumed his seat, and Mr. Randolph, so far as I learned, never noticed the retort.

I have heard the story, but cannot vouch for its correctness, that Mr. Randolph, in one of his discursive speeches, said that the question whether fleas had souls had been discussed. Turning to Mr. Campbell, he said: "We will leave that point to be settled by our divine."

One thing was quite clear: the old men did not wield the influence in the Convention which they had formerly exercised in deliberative bodies. Monroe was elected president of the Convention, but retired from the office on account of his unfitness to perform its duties. All his efforts to speak presented his abilities in unfavorable contrast with those of the leaders of the body. Judge Coalter spoke to show that if he had ever been wise his wisdom had departed. Giles shook himself and went forth to battle as when his eloquence spell-bound the Congress of the United States, but he was a Samson shorn of his locks. Madison displayed his good judgment by declining to enter into debate, and giving his opinions ex cathedra, plainly and concisely, only on important questions. Marshall was the only man who had passed the age of three-score years and ten that showed himself able to grapple in argument with the men of renown in the full vigor of life. All who encountered the Chief Justice in debate felt that they had their hands full. Randolph, Leigh, Upshur, and Broadnax-men in the prime of life—were unquestionably the lions of the Convention. Nor should the name of Philip Doddridge, of Northwestern Virginia, be overlooked. He struck me as being one of the most sensible, practical, active members of the body.

Whether the comparative failure of the octogenarians in the Convention was due to the overestimate of their abilities in a past age, or the declining of their mental powers with the increase of years, is a question that history and physiology are equally interested to settle. We incline to the latter opinion. The old men had retired from the active labors of life or were suffering from infirmities. Their minds, freed from the pressure of toil, had lost the elasticity, vigor, and power of endurance which they enjoyed in their palmy days. Marshall was an exception to these remarks. He had continued on the bench of the Supreme Court of the United States. His mind was kept in constant vigorous exercise, and consequently retained all its powers unimpaired. This opinion accords with the observations of my life. I have seen many persons in their dotage —some reduced to the imbecility of childhood—but I have no recollection of having seen man or woman reduced to this condition who was in circumstances that afforded scope and furnished motive for constant, earnest intellectual effort. It is unquestionably true that many men at the age of four-score years have their mental powers in full play—their imagination bright, their judgment clear, their memory only slightly impaired, and their power to think, to write, and to command in no degree diminished.

## XXXV.

#### MEMORABLE EVENTS.

DURING my residence in the Northern Neck several important and stirring events occurred. The first, in the order of time, was the Southampton Insurrection. About the last of August, 1831, the people of the Neck were greatly excited by the most appalling rumors. It was stated that an enemy, of unknown strength, coming from nobody knew where, had appeared in the neighborhood of the Dismal Swamp, with some undiscovered purpose, and were slaughtering the people and desolating the country. The story, though involved in mystery and believed to be exaggerated, created the most intense anxiety and the most feverish apprehensions. Where the invasion would end no one could tell. Men brushed up their old muskets and fowling-pieces, supplied themselves with ball and powder, and patrolled the country, while women passed anxious days and sleepless nights. I was myself suffering with a malarial fever, and had visions of mischief and bloodshed which might well have appalled a stouter heart than mine. The slow mails brought confused and contradictory accounts of the affair, and the agony of suspense was continued for days or even weeks.

At length, however, the smoky rumor was blown away, and the following facts were brought to light: Nat Turner, a slave in the county of Southampton, Virginia, was a born fanatic. He grew up with the expectation of his parents and his sable friends that he would accomplish some great but undefined purpose. He was a negro of unusual shrewdness, and gained a controlling influence over his acquaintances. He was not a member of any church nor a professor of religion, but he had, or supposed he had, visions and revelations from Heaven. He was of mature age, and the time approached when his achievements were to commence. An eclipse of the sun, and its green

appearance some months after (which I well remember), he construed as signs that he must enter on his mission. six negro men were made acquainted with his plans, or rather with his vague fancies, for he seems to have had no definite aim or plan. They became subservient to his wishes, and after a feast in the forest, in which strong drink was freely used, they entered on their murderous work. The master of Turner, who, he admitted, had always treated him kindly, was the first victim of their phrensy. They broke into his house, and, having murdered him with an axe, soon slew the remainder of the Their bloody work having been commenced, they became reckless, and went from house to house of the unsuspecting inhabitants and slew, with relentless fury, men, women, and children. In their course they gathered guns, pistols, and other weapons of destruction, mounted horses where they could find them, and enlisted volunteers until the mutineers numbered seventy. Before the morning light fifty-five persons, chiefly helpless women and children, had fallen victims to their senseless rage.

The news of the massacre spread like lightning through all the surrounding region. Men were aroused and armed themselves for the defense of their lives and those of their families and neighbors. At the very first resistance the murderous gang broke and fled like a frightened flock of sheep. They rode up rapidly to the house of an old gentleman who, having been warned of their approach, had armed his family and slaves for their reception. When they had approached within twenty steps of the house, apprehending no resistance to their fiendish purpose, five guns were fired at them; one mutineer was killed, several were wounded, and the rest turned and fled in consternation. This was the end of the insurrection. It is amazing that men engaged in so desperate and reckless an enterprise, and who had shed blood with such heartless cruelty, should have been such wretched cowards. Deeds of blood are sometimes half redeemed from infamy by the heroism or generosity of those who perpetrate them, but in the Southampton insurrection there was not among the insurgents a single trait

of bravery or the slightest gleam of humanity. Their career, from the beginning to the end, was marked by brutality, cowardice, and stupidity. The probability is that strong drink had more influence over them than the love of race or of freedom.

The reader may well imagine, or rather is utterly unable to imagine, the excitement and dismay spread throughout the country by this inexplicable outbreak. Troops were hastened to the scene of conflict from Norfolk, Petersburg, Richmond, and many other places. Their aid, however, was not needed. The insurrection was quelled at the first resistance. The murderers were shot, or arrested, imprisoned, tried, and hanged. More than a dozen of them suffered the extreme penalty of the law. Nat Turner, the prime author of the mischief, concealed himself for some weeks in a cave, but was finally arrested, calmly tried, and duly punished.

The effects of the insurrection were wide-spread and abiding. The negroes who had been trusted by their masters were suspected, watched, kept under strict restraints, and their privileges greatly abridged. The whole country was in a state of feverish apprehension, and the most painful as well as the most amusing alarms were constantly occurring. The blowing of a horn or the sight of a few unknown persons in company was quite sufficient to cause a neighborhood panic and call its undisciplined militia to arms. One pretty certain case of temporary insanity and consequent manslaughter came within my knowledge. When the Legislature met it adopted most stringent laws in regard to the negroes. They were forbidden to assemble except with white persons, their preachers were prohibited from preaching, and the most rigid police was established throughout the country. I then thought, and I still think, that the laws were more severe than was demanded by the exigency of the times, but they certainly found a plausible defense in the excited state of the public mind and in the defenseless condition of the women and children in the rural districts. As the excitement died away the bloody scenes of Southampton were partially forgotten, and the slaves proved themselves to be quiet and tractable, many of the laws were

modified, and the condition of the slaves became very much as it had been before the tragic insurrection occurred.

In the year 1832, that following the insurrection, the Asiatic cholera first made its appearance in this country. It had for some time been steadily advancing from Asia through Central Europe westward. We read of its ravages with much the same feelings that people have recently heard of the fearful desolation of the famine in China. It was a terrible scourge, but it did not concern us. We are more affected by the sight of the sufferings of a dog than we are by the death of a million of people on the opposite side of the globe. When, however, the plague reached England, the apprehension was awakened that it might visit this country. The fear, however, was slight. The Atlantic ocean, it was supposed, presented an insuperable barrier to its progress. It was a delusive confidence. It first made its appearance at Quebec, in Canada. Almost simultaneously it broke out in Norfolk, Va. The news of its arrival spread, not, indeed, with electric speed, for then there were no telegraphs, but with all the rapidity that post-coaches and steamers, impelled and guided by alarm, could secure. The news created a universal panic. The bravest hearts quailed at the prospect of such a scourge. The alarm was intensified by the graphic reports of the fearful ravages of the disease in Asia, its native region, and its track of desolation through Central Europe. Imagination was busy in painting the probable mischief of the plague in the Western World. Many a cheek which had not been blanched at the exaggerated rumors of the Southampton insurrection turned pale at the authentic intelligence that the Eastern scourge had reached our continent and commenced its devastations in our chief seaport. Even the doctors, usually so courageous in facing deadly epidemics, were terrified at the prospect of encountering a disease with whose symptoms they were unacquainted, and whose power had baffled the skill and resources of the medical profession in the Old World.

It is a law of our nature that familiarity with danger diminishes the alarm which it inspires. It is well that it is so. Other-

wise, men would be unnerved and unfitted for the perilous and unavoidable conflicts of life. By degrees the fear of cholera subsided. It was found by experience that prudent sanitary measures might generally guard against the disease, and that prompt and skillful medical treatment in a great majority of cases saved the patients. Still it was a sore scourge, and many were its victims.

No place in Virginia suffered from the epidemic more severely than did Richmond. When at its acme more than fifty persons were buried in a single day from a population of about 20,000—equal to 200 a day from its present inhabitants a terrible levy on human life, surely. At the time of its prevalence in the city I had occasion to visit my parents in Bedford county. My route lay through the inflicted city, and I dreaded much to pass through it. Pass through it I did, and learned to my delight that not one of my acquaintances, not then very numerous, had fallen a victim to the plague. It was a remarkable fact that the disease on that visit preved almost entirely on the intemperate, the imprudent, and the dwellers in unhealthy localities and in crowded and ill-ventilated houses. I left the city with my fear of the malady quite abated, and returned to it in a few weeks before the disappearance of the disease, and remained several days without any dread of it.

Since its first appearance in this country I have had no little opportunity of becoming acquainted with the epidemic of Asiatic cholera. It is a fearful scourge, but I am convinced from some observation, and from quite extensive inquiries, that against no violent epidemic can judicious hygienic rules afford so probable a defense, and none taken in its incipiency is so likely to yield to well-directed medical treatment. If, however, the patient is permitted to pass through the premonitory stage of the disease till collapse sets in, it will be a mere chance if the most profound medical science, with all the drugs in the shops, can save him from the tomb.

## XXXVI.

## THE BAPTIST TRIENNIAL CONVENTION.

FIRST attended a session of this body in the city of New York in 1832. At that time a journey from the Northern Neck to the American emporium was not what it now is. Accompanied by my friend, Colonel Hall, I travelled in a steamer to Baltimore, and thence to Frenchtown, at the head of the Chesapeake bay. Here I first saw a railroad, on which the passengers were drawn by horses across the peninsula, at the rate of six or eight miles an hour, to Newcastle, on the Delaware river. From this point my companion and myself ascended the river in a steamer, touching at Philadelphia and landing at Trenton, New Jersey. From this place we went with a long line of coaches by Princeton to New Brunswick, on the Raritan river. Down this narrow stream we were carried in a steamer to its mouth, and across the bay to New York. I have described our journey that the reader may see how great a change has taken place in the manner of travelling in a period of forty-seven years.

New York impressed me as a great city. At that time there was a strong commercial rivalry between it and the city of Philadelphia. Each was striving for the pre-eminence. A glance at the shipping in New York harbor and its crowded, busy streets furnished decisive proof that the contest could not last long, and was of no doubtful issue. It then contained a population of about 200,000, and was rapidly growing and extending its trade. My companion and myself shared in the hospitality of Bro. Luke Davies and his family. He was a minister, without a charge; was engaged in the manufacture of stocks, then just coming into use. I was quite surprised to see Rev. S. H. Cone with one on his neck, as he was the first minister whom I had seen following that fashion. By our host and his family we were courteously received and treated with princely fare.

The Convention assembled in Oliver-street church, then under the pastorate of Elder S. H. Cone. Since the last meeting of the body the Rev. R. B. Semple, who had presided with dignity over its deliberations, had passed to his reward, and the popular pastor of Oliver-street church was elected to fill the chair. Cone was in the prime of life, rather below the ordinary size of men, with a peculiarly open and cheerful countenance, and a head prematurely white. He presided over the Convention with great promptness, efficiency, and firmness. He assumed more authority than would have been tolerated in a strictly parliamentary body, but he exercised it for the dispatch of business.

Here I first met many prominent Baptist ministers, whom I subsequently knew more or less intimately. Some of them I will mention. Dr. Sharp was a Boston pastor, an Englishman by birth and education; a slow, hesitating speaker, but calm and weighty in council. Dr. Bolles, secretary of the Board, led by his office to take an active part in the business of the Convention; without brilliant talents; was a judicious and diligent officer. Dr. Kendrick, president of Hamilton College, New York, was a tall, rawboned, rough-looking man, with strong sense and decided influence in the Convention. Wayland, Knowles, and Stow were the rising men of the body. Wayland had established his reputation as a preacher by his published sermon on the Moral Dignity of the Missionary Enterprise; but his manner of speaking did not correspond with the beauty and strength of his written style. Knowles had gained renown by his admirable Life of Mrs. Judson, but added nothing to it by anything which he said in the Convention; and, to the universal sorrow of the denomination, soon fell a victim to small-pox, the scourge of the human race. Stow had distinguished himself as the editor of the Columbian Star, and preached, if I mistake not, the introductory sermon before the Convention without derogating from his reputation or diminishing the promise of his usefulness. I must not omit the names of fathers Bennet and Peck. They were ministers of the old dispensation, residing in the western part of the State of New

York, venerable for their age, and distinguished for their piety, good sense, and usefulness. They were among the most devout, zealous, heart-stirring preachers that I have ever known. If wise counsels were needed, or oil was to be poured on the troubled waters, or the blessing of God was to be invoked, fathers Bennet and Peck were always in demand, and they were not called on in vain. Time would fail me to speak of McClay, Dodge (of New Jersey), Galusha, Choules, and many others—all trusted for their wisdom, loved for their piety, and honored for their gifts.

The representation from the South was small. Luther Rice, then laboring there, Brantly (the elder) and Dagg, both Southern men and pastors in Philadelphia; Saunders and Judge Stocks, from Georgia (if my memory is not at fault), with others, doubtless, whom I have forgotten, were all present, and some of them prominent in the Convention.

The routine of the body was dispatched without special interest. One matter almost absorbed its attention. The Board supported a mission among the Indians of Georgia. Legislature of the State had passed laws extending its jurisdiction over the Indians within its territory, and requiring that persons residing among them, missionaries as well as others, should, on pain of incarceration in the penitentiary, acknowledge its authority. The Baptist missionaries, without complaint or reluctance, submitted to the authority of the State, and, without its interference, successfully prosecuted their work. The Presbyterian missionary in the Indian territory deemed it his duty to pursue a different course. Denying the right of the State of Georgia to exercise jurisdiction over the Indians in their territory, he refused to yield to its authority, and was consequently arrested, tried, condemned, and actually sent to labor in the State penitentiary. The matter created great excitement in the country, and became the theme of political and sectional controversy.

The committee of the Convention on Indian Missions brought in a report approving the course pursued by the Baptist missionaries in Georgia. The report was calm in its spirit and prudent in its statements, and would have been promptly adopted had it not been supposed that by implication it approved the course of Georgia, and censured the conduct of the Presbyterian minister. It led to a protracted and heated discussion, in which Galusha and Choules took prominent part in opposition to the report, and Rice in support of it. After a wearisome and, no doubt, quite able debate, the subject was referred to a select committee, of which J. L. Dagg was chairman, or for which, at least, he prepared and read the report.

The next day, when the heat of the controversy had in a good measure subsided, Dagg read the report of the select committee, modified to avoid the objections which had been urged against it. He followed its reading with a speech which, in my judgment, was the speech of the Convention. It was calm, clear, forcible, and in a lovely spirit. It was simply a question whether the Convention should approve or censure the conduct of their missionaries in Georgia. They had violated no law of God or man. They had acted prudently, their labors had been owned of God, and they were entitled to the commendation of their brethren. If the Presbyterian missionary deemed it proper to pursue a different course, that was no concern of the Convention. Let the Presbyterians attend to it. I do not give an outline, but merely the topics of the speech. It made a deep impression, elicited no reply, and the report was adopted, I think, unanimously.

I heard but little preaching during the meeting of the Convention. Dr. Wayland preached at night in the Oliver-street church. The congregation was not crowded. Indeed, I was surprised at the little interest awakened in the proceedings of the Convention in the great, bustling city of New York, so strikingly in contrast with what I had seen on similar occasions in the cities of Virginia. The Doctor preached from Rom. vii: 13: "That sin by the commandment might become exceeding sinful." His theme was the sinfulness of sin, and he illustrated his doctrine by showing the obligation which sin violates, as seen in the power it defies, the goodness it abuses, the holiness it offends, and the long-suffering it rejects, and in

the effects it produces, as seen in the happiness it sacrifices, the punishment it incurs, and the reward it offers. From the doctrine he inferred the justice of God in punishing sin, his grace in providing a Savior for sinners, and concluded by pointing out the bearing of the subject on the mission cause. The sermon was plain, sensible, and solemn, but lacked the graces of oratory and the impressive fervor which I had expected. Masculine common sense, as I afterwards more fully learned, was the characteristic of Dr. Wayland's mind and sermons.

Sunday morning I preached to a small Welsh congregation in Brooklyn. The town contained at that time, if I remember rightly, twelve or fourteen thousand inhabitants, and gave to my unpracticed eyes no indication of its rapid growth and its coming prosperity. I do not recollect the subject on which I preached, or anything pertaining to the service. At their close I was assured by a Welsh brother that my manner of preaching was very much like that of the Welsh ministers. I received the remark as a great compliment, as about that time the celebrated extract from a sermon of Christmas Evans, concerning the appearance of Christ at Calvary, after a lapse of four thousand years, to fulfill his covenant obligations for the redemption of sinners, was widely circulated and greatly admired. Howbeit, the good brother did not intimate that my sermon bore any resemblance to the eloquent and seraphic specimen of Evans' preaching, but only to the ordinary style of the Welsh sermons.

## XXXVII.

# THE BAPTIST TRIENNIAL CONVENTION— Continued.

THIS body met in its eighth session in this city in the year 1835. It was probably the largest and most interesting of all its meetings. The prominent ministers of the day from the North and South were present. The South, especially, was far more fully represented in the Convention than it had been before. The pleasure of the occasion was greatly increased by the presence of Rev. Dr. Francis A. Cox and Rev. James Hoby, delegates to the Convention from the Baptist Union, England; Rev. Amos Sutton, missionary of the General English Baptist Missionary Society to Orissa, India; Rev. Evan Jones, missionary among the Indians, and Bro. O-ga-naye, an Indian convert. The introductory sermon before the Convention was delivered by Rev. S. H. Cone, of New York, from Acts ix: 6: "What wilt thou have me to do?" He had a great reputation as a preacher. Probably my expectation of his preaching was too highly excited for me to do him justice. The sermon was not equal to his renown. It was fluently and gracefully preached, but was not particularly pertinent to the occasion, and was more distinguished by vivacity than strength, and by imagination than logic. It was delivered quite extempore, and was probably not a fair specimen of his preaching. I do not remember that I heard him preach on any other occasion, but I frequently heard him speak in the Convention and in other deliberative bodies, and considered him a ready, clear, and vigorous debater, and very likely to carry his points. He was re-elected president of the Convention, and performed his official duties with promptness, tact, and success. The business of the body was conducted with unusual spirit and harmony. The addresses of Drs. Cox and Hoby, Rev. Mr. Sutton, and brethren Jones and O-ga-na-ye were excellent, and awakened a profound interest. The speeches of Mr. Sutton, especially, were among the most touching and persuasive of any that I have heard from returned missionaries, and it has been my privilege to listen to many.

At this meeting I saw, for the only time, Rev. Jesse Mercer, D. D., of Georgia. I had heard of him from my boyhood, for he enjoyed for many years the highest and most widely extended reputation of any Baptist minister of the South. He was old, but by no means superannuated. He was tall, of large proportions, and of venerable and commanding presence. He had a bald and singularly shaped head. It ran up to a point, unusually distant from his eyes. His bump of reverence, according to the phrenological theory, was largely developed. He commanded great respect, but did not take an active part in the business of the Convention. I heard him preach at night in the old Second Baptist church. His text was Acts iv: 12: "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." His sermon was plain, evangelical, and solemn, but not remarkable either for originality of thought, beauty of style, or grace of delivery. Had I judged of his abilities from this discourse I should have ranked him below many of our Virginia preachers who were far inferior to him in reputation. He must, however, have been a very able preacher. I heard Luther Rice say that he considered him the best preacher whom he had ever heard, as he had never heard him preach on any subject that did not seem to be, under his clear and impressive representation, the most important that could be discussed. Few men were better qualified to judge of preaching than Rice, and not one within the range of my acquaintance had heard so many preachers of distinction as he. I must think, however, that Dr. Mercer was notable rather for his good judgment, wisdom, and sound doctrinal views than for his attractive pulpit gifts.

To Dr. Cox was assigned the post of honor. He preached to a crowded audience in the old First Baptist church on Lord's-day morning. He was about sixty years old, with a

full suit of hair almost as white as snow. He was of the ordinary height of men, inclining to corpulency, with a soft and ruddy complexion. His dress was uncommon, but exceedingly neat. He wore a round-breasted coat, a ruffled shirt, short pants, with long hose and knee buckles. He was an unusually fine-looking man, and peculiarly graceful in his manners. Some brother called him to account for wearing a ruffled shirt. He replied that he dressed in the fashion of the old and plain men of England, but that the American ministers were clothed as were the London dandies. His text was Psa. lxxii: 19: "And let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen, and Amen." It was a missionary sermon, and heard with great interest. It was delivered in the most polished style and in the most graceful manner, but was not remarkable for its strength or pathos. It was a beautiful rather than an able sermon. One thing in the discourse attracted particular attention. He dropped the sound of g in all words ending with it. He said learnin', mornin', and the like. When asked his reason for the pronunciation, he stated that he followed the usage of the London bar, which was the standard of English pronunciation. He was doubtless right, as he had received the honorary degree of LL. D. as well as of D. D. The usage, however, must have been partial or transient, as I did not observe it on my visit to London, though I was present in the Court of the Queen's Bench and listened to speeches on the trial of the pretended Sir Roger Ticheborne.

I heard Rev. James Hoby preach in the old Third Baptist church, at the corner of Marshall and Second streets. He differed widely in appearance from Dr. Cox. He was low, chuffy, with a red face and a rough exterior—a genuine John Bull. His text was Matt. xiii: 31, 32: "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a grain of mustard seed," &c. By "the kingdom of heaven," he understood the reign of the Messiah, or of divine grace, and he noticed the insignificance of its beginning, the steadiness of its progress, and its ultimate triumph. The sermon was an able exposition of the text, quite at variance with the views of the modern Millenarians; less erudite

and finished, but certainly not less instructive and vigorous, than that of Dr. Cox. The sermon of the latter was more popular, but that of the former made the more abiding impression.

The English deputation were entertained by Bro. Richard C. Wortham, of the First Baptist church, at his hospitable mansion on Grace street between Second and Third streets. About that time slavery was abolished in the British West India Islands by an act of Parliament. The English Baptists were champions in the cause of emancipation, and Dr. Cox and Rev. Mr. Hoby were sent over to this country, in part, to bear testimony against American slavery. As the Convention was held in a slave-holding State, and the people were sensitive on the subject of slavery, the deputation deemed it proper to proceed with caution. They requested a number of representative ministers and others to meet them in a conference on the subject at the house of their host. I was a member of the conference, but remember imperfectly of whom it was composed. Messrs. Cox and Hoby laid before the meeting the mission with which they were charged by their English brethren in regard to American slavery, and requested the views of the conference on the subject. Most of the brethren spoke apologetically of slavery. It was an evil, had been entailed on us, was so mingled with our institutions as to be ineradicable, and all attempts to abolish it would do more harm than good. I remember that I compared it—perhaps not very courteously, in the presence of English loyalists—to hereditary monarchy, which, though in violation of the rights of the people—involving a kind of national slavery—would better be endured than rashly overthrown. Dr. William B. Johnson, of South Carolina, however, came out squarely in support of slavery. He stated that the present generation of Southerners found slavery in existence, and were not responsible for its origination, and that they learned from the Scriptures that slavery existed among the Israelites with the divine approbation, and that Christ and the apostles, living and laboring under a government which protected slavery, never uttered or penned a sen-

tence in condemnation of it, and, consequently, the Southern conscience was not troubled on the subject. The conference were unanimous in the opinion that the deputation should abstain from all intermeddling with American slavery. acted according to this advice, and in all their sermons, public addresses, and private conversations they refrained from remarks—certainly offensive remarks—on the subject of slavery. On their return to England they were strongly censured by the abolitionists for their supposed want of courage and fidelity in dealing with sinful slaveholders. It was considered that they should, at the risk of martyrdom, have borne public testimony against slavery and its evils. They might have done it, but they would have displayed more of foolhardiness than wisdom by their course. By their prudent and Christian deportment they exerted a wholesome influence, and left behind them a fragrant reputation.

This was the last harmonious meeting of the Triennial Convention. The abolition agitators had been kept away from the meeting by its Southern location, or kept in check by the predominance of Southern sentiment, but they had sown the seeds of discord and strife, which germinated and grew apace. The subsequent meetings of the body were increasingly disturbed by discussions on the subject of slavery, until the controversy reached its culmination at the meeting of the Convention in Philadelphia, in 1844.

## XXXVIII.

#### NORTHERN NECK DEACONS.

CEVERAL of the deacons with whom I was associated in Ithe Neck are entitled to a place in my Recollections. I have already referred to Deacon Rawleigh Dunaway, the grandfather of Dr. Thomas S. Dunaway, of Fredericksburg. When I first knew him he was about fifty-five years old, above the medium height, with brown hair, changing to white, lean, and as ill-favored as one might find among a thousand. He was, in several respects, a notable man. He was baptized by Straughan; was his intimate friend and an enthusiastic admirer of his preaching. He had been for years sheriff of Lancaster county, and by industry and good management had elevated himself from an humble condition to a state of independence and respectability. He had been long a deacon when I first knew him, and was quite confirmed in his title. Soon after I went to the Neck my friend, Rev. Daniel Witt, made me a visit. When he reached the Peninsula he inquired, as he had been directed to do, for Mr. Rawleigh Dunaway. The person of whom he made the inquiry, having been connected with a post-office, replied that there was no man in the Neck of that name, but there was a Deacon R. Dunaway residing in Lancaster county. That was the man inquired after, and the informer had mistaken his title for his given name-a mistake not surprising, as the term deacon was very rarely used at that time and in that region as a title of respect.

Deacon Dunaway was, more than almost any man that I have known, controlled by his feelings. His temperament was excitable, ardent, and variable. If he were called on to pray in a time of deep and pervasive religious feeling, and was not himself in a lively frame of mind, he would pray in the most doleful manner, as if the world were just coming to an end. Judging from his prayer you would conclude that there was neither

faith, nor knowledge, nor piety, nor hope on earth. If, on the other hand, his own feelings were excited, he would pray as if he had just caught a glimpse of the rising glories of the millennium. He seemed to take it for granted that everybody saw and felt precisely as he did.

Much of my success in the ministry in the Neck was due to Deacon Dunaway. My preaching had the power to stir his emotions. When I saw the old man's eyes glisten, the tears run down his furrowed cheeks, and his lips quiver, I knew that moral power was accumulating. On closing my sermon, I would say, "Brother Dunaway, will you make an exhortation?" He was ready for the service. He would rise slowly and commence his remarks with great deliberation. Gradually the kindling fires within would break forth into a most melting exhortation. In proportion to the intensity of his emotions would be the clearness of his thoughts, the accuracy of his style, and the impressiveness of his gestures. He would walk up and down the aisles gracefully and seemingly unconscious of his movements, varying his remarks to suit the necessities of his hearers, and hard was the heart that was not moved by his appeals. The whole congregation would be softened intotears. In his happiest addresses he was among the most impressive orators that I have ever heard. Broaddus, in his golden strains, and Kerr, in his seraphic appeals, did not excel him in the power to entrance and subdue a plain country congregation. Many were converted through his occasional and impassioned appeals.

The Deacon rarely spoke publicly when his feelings were not excited, but when he did he seemed to be an entirely different man from what he was when he spoke under excitement. The freshness, freedom, and vigor of his expressions were all gone, and he was like Samson shorn of his locks.

Brother Dunaway was one of the warmest friends I have ever had. There was a difference of thirty years in our ages, but our temperament, views, pursuits, and aspirations made us eminently congenial. All the time of my residence in the Northern Neck he was my companion, my counsellor, my

comforter, and in all my temporal interests my guardian. He lived until I went to St. Louis to reside, and died of some inflammatory disease when he was quite old. He was a true man, impulsive, not always discreet—as ardent men are not likely to be—but sincere and devoted in his friendships as he was quick in his resentments—an earnest and useful Christian. If I were permitted to call back the dead he would be among the first whose mysterious society I should seek. It would be pleasant to commune with him of the almost forgotten events in which we were mutually interested, of the wonderful and unanticipated scenes through which I have passed since he left earth, and, if it were lawful, of those still more surprising scenes known only to the redeemed in the spirit land.

Thomas S. Sydnor was a convert at the first Baptist camp-meeting, in the Northern Neck. He came a considerable distance to the meeting, and was among the first to indicate a desire for public prayer in his behalf. He was then in the vigor of life, and a tall, portly, good-looking gentleman. He was of fine business talents, a commissioner in chancery, and one of the most popular citizens of Northumberland county. He was without a classical education, but fond of reading, and well informed on most subjects of general interest. From the hour of his conversion he commenced a decided, earnest, consistent Christain life. He was soon baptized and became a member of the branch of Wicomico church assembling at Coan meeting-house. His qualifications marked him out for the deaconship, and he was soon chosen for the office and entered on the discharge of its duties.

Brother Sydnor was a *model deacon*. I have known many excellent men in the diaconate, but I have scarcely known one who entered so fully into the spirit of his office, or so diligently and faithfully magnified it. In him were exemplified the words of Paul: "He used the office of a deacon well, and purchased to himself a good degree, and great boldness in the faith which is in Christ Jesus." He was not remarkable for his spiritual gifts. He had less ability in public speaking and less readiness in *extempore* prayer than Deacon Dunaway. He had excel-

lent talents in the management of secular affairs, and these he consecrated to the interests of the church. To these he attended con amore. These he studied and labored to promote. He was almost constantly doing something in fulfillment of his office unanticipated and out of the common course. If the house of worship needed enlargement or repairs, they were promptly and diligently attended to by him. If anything could be done to increase the comfort or usefulness of the pastor, he was sure not to neglect it; and many things of this kind occurred to him which less thoughtful deacons would have overlooked. He fulfilled the duties of his office in a plain, country congregation. Everything was done and conducted in a cheap, simple style. There was no high-sounding organ, no hired choir, and no costly pulpit ornaments; but there were neatness, order, good taste, and every convenience for instruction and devotion—all secured by the exertions of the indefatigable Deacon. He lived some miles from the house of worship, but all the appointments for meeting he was sure to attend, if not kept away by causes beyond his control. He contributed liberally of his means for church purposes, but his example, his influence, and his faithful efforts to induce other church members to give according as God had prospered them to the support of his cause were worth far more than his generous contributions. He was a kind and earnest, but not rigid disciplinarian. He made due allowances for the ignorance, the infirmities, and the circumstances of erring church members.

It has been many years since Deacon Sydnor went to his long home. He left behind him a good name, and his works followed him. I do not know whether any stone marks the resting-place of his body, but quite sure I am that the graves of many men of less merit have been honored by towering and costly monuments. He needed no memorial in stone or marble. Coan meeting-house and Coan church, so long favored with the faithful and useful labors of the venerable Dr. Kirk, are the enduring memorials of Deacon Sydnor.

It is hardly just to the memory of other deacons to pass

them unnoticed in my Recollections. Deacons Colonel Samuel Downing and Captain Richard H. Gaskins, of Northumberland, and Lawson Hathaway and Zamuth George, of Lancaster, were all excellent men, faithful deacons, and my helpers in the ministry. The even tenor of their lives, however, did not furnish incidents deserving to be recorded. They lived to God, but lived unknown to fame; were loved while they lived. and lamented when they died; filled up the measure of their years, and received, I doubt not, a bright reward. Little knew the world how much it was indebted to their fervent prayers, their unostentatious labors, and their gentle, pious influence for its varied blessings-temporal and spiritual. Even the churches which they served so long and faithfully comprehended but imperfectly their moral worth and how deeply they were indebted for their prosperity to the prayers and toils of their godly deacons.

Deacon Norris, though not wiser or better than the deacons named, yet on account of his marked qualities and some singular events in his life, deserves special notice, but I must defer it to another number.

## XXXIX.

#### NORTHERN NECK DEACONS—Continued.

WAS introduced to Deacon Epa. Norris at the Dover Association in 1825. He was one of the committee at whose request I visited the Northern Neck. He was then about sixty years old, large and corpulent, with a smooth skin and a pale complexion. He was plain and old-fashioned in his dress, wearing a round-breasted coat, and was faultlessly neat in his appearance, and simple as a child in his manners. His culture had been neglected; his information was quite limited; his convictions were deep and his prejudices were strong. He was baptized by Lunsford, and had been trained under the ministry of Straughan. His religious character was very decided. He was eminently conscientious, fervently devout, and a demonstrative Christian and Baptist. No one could be with him a few hours without learning something of his religious character and principles. Having been taught by Lunsford and Straughan, he was immovably settled in his religious opinions, and considered none of the young preachers qualified to instruct him. His prayers were remarkable for their simplicity and fervor, and sometimes, under excitement, he would deliver quite pathetic exhortations. The rigor of his religious principles and his uncompromising hostility to vice rendered him rather unpopular among his worldly neighbors.

During the war between this country and Great Britain, hearing that the enemy had landed and were marching through the country, he saddled his horse and went forth to make observations and inquiries. He had not gone far before he fell in with a marauding party, and was captured as a supposed scout, and carried on one of the enemy's vessels lying in the Chesapeake bay. On being examined as to the strength and position of the American forces, he said to the officer: "You may kill me, but you cannot make me tell you anything about our

army." He was retained on board until his linen became soiled, and one of the officers gave him a ruffled shirt, which he thankfully accepted and put on, carefully concealing the ruffles under his vest. He seems to have made a favorable impression on the officers, for he was invited to a dining party on the flag-ship of the fleet, and accepted the invitation. At the close of the feast there were toasts and songs. At length Mr. Norris was called on for a song. He modestly declined; but there was a general demonstration of a desire that he should sing. At length he yielded. He had a fine voice, and could sing the familiar hymns of the day in most plaintive tunes. He struck up, in a solemn tune, the beautiful Psalm of Watts:

"Sweet is the work, my God! my King!
To praise thy name, give thanks and sing."

The remembrance of his home and family and the pleasant meetings with his brethren, as contrasted with his present captive state, softened his heart, and he sung, with tearful eyes, the words:

"Fools never lift their thoughts so high;
Like brutes they live—like brutes they die;
Like grass they flourish, till thy breath
Blasts them in everlasting death."

Before the old man had finished his psalm all merriment had ceased, and a deep solemnity pervaded the festal party. At the close of the singing the Commodore said: "Mr. Norris, you are a good man, and you shall be sent home." As soon as arrangements could be made he bade adieu to the officers, was lowered into a boat and set ashore, with a liberal supply of salt, then very scarce and valuable in the Northern Neck. He soon reached his distressed family, with a bosom swelling with gratitude and delight, and adorned, as it never was before or afterwards, with a fine ruffled shirt.

Another event in the life of Deacon Norris equally illustrative of his character occurred not long before my settlement in the Neck. He had a corn-shucking at his house—a custom well understood in Virginia. It was usual on such an occasion

to supply the laborers bountifully with strong drink. The old man not only furnished the stimulant, but partook of it freely himself, and became intoxicated. The news flew rapidly through the county that Mr. Norris was drunk at his cornshucking. The charge could neither be denied nor extenuated. The report gave great satisfaction to his dissipated neighbors, who had been annoyed by his upright example and his sharp reproofs. It had turned out as they had predicted; he was not better than other people. In a short time he had occasion to go to Nuttsville, a store and a resort for his drinking neighbors. When they saw him approaching they resolved to have some amusement with him: "Mr. Norris, we hear that you got drunk at the corn-shucking at your house?" "Yes," said the Deacon, "I did. I don't deny it. I am not angry with you because you laugh at me—I deserve to be laughed at. I am willing to lie down on the ground and let you wipe your feet upon me. If the Lord will forgive me, another drop of spirit shall never go down my throat." There was no fun in laughing at such a penitent as he was. His revilers were struck dumb, and were obliged to admit that there was a spirit in him which they did not possess. He kept his pledge to the hour of his death. There was not a physician on earth on whose prescription he would have tasted liquor had he been assured that the preservation of his life depended on his doing it.

When I went to reside in the Northern Neck Deacon Norris received me very cordially. It was not long, however, before an event occurred by which he was temporarily alienated from me. At that time the use of collars separate from shirts was just coming into fashion. By chance, I borrowed a collar, and while using it spent a night at the plain and hospitable home of the Deacon. On rising in the morning, I remarked that I had never worn a collar before—that I was pleased with it, and that I must get me a supply of collars. He seemed to be awakened into solemn meditation. After some delay he said: "I am not sure that it is right to wear collars." Without the slightest doubt of my ability to convince him that there was

nothing wrong in the practice, I commenced an argument in its favor. The more I argued on the subject the more deeply he seemed to be convinced that it was sinful. "It is," he said, "hypocrisy—a make-believe. You pretend to have on a clean shirt, and you haven't." As a crowning argument, he said that Lunsford and Straughan never wore collars, and he was sure if they were living they would not do it. Having failed in argument, I resolved to see what I could do in the way of conciliation. I said to him: "Brother Norris, if my wearing collars will hurt your feelings, I will not wear them." "You think it right to wear them," said the old man, "and that is as bad as if you were to do it." I could avoid the practice, but could not change my opinion about it, and we parted, leaving the question undecided.

I was willing to let it drop, but Deacon Norris was not a manto yield his convictions. At every opportunity the subject was rediscussed, and the same arguments were repeated. It chanced that Deacon Gaskins and myself spent a night with Brother Norris. Gaskins had a more discriminating and logical mind than Norris. The grave question about the lawfulness of wearing collars came up for discussion. I was glad to commit it to the hands of the two deacons. Deacon Norris repeated his stereotyped argument: "It is hypocrisy; you pretend to have on a clean shirt, and haven't." Deacon Gaskins replied: "Brother Norris, when you have been from home and your cravat has become soiled on the outside, do you never turn it and put the clean side out?" It was a nail driven in a sure place. Deacon Norris was accustomed, as was the fashion of the day, to wear a cravat of spotless white, carefully tied at the back of his neck. He was too honest to deny that he sometimes turned his cravat for the purpose of concealing its dirt, and of too much penetration not to perceive that the act involved the very principle which he was so fiercely condemning. He was for a while silent, evidently endeavoring to see if there were any escape from the consequence that followed the confession that he was bound to make. He could see no door of deliverance. With a sorrowful countenance and signs

of deep penitence, he said: "Yes, Brother Gaskins, I have; but, if the Lord will forgive me, I will never do it again." Whether the old man needed forgiveness for the supposed fault, I cannot say, but it is quite certain that, whether forgiven or not, he never again turned his cravat to conceal its soiled exterior.

For months the controversy was continued with undiminished earnestness, but without any increase of light. At length it was closed. The Deacon and I were together at Mrs. Downing's. She was an intelligent, pious old Baptist, of the Lunsford school. He proposed that the question should be decided by her, and I gladly assented to the proposition. Brother Norris, to be sure of a favorable decision, undertook to state the case. Mrs. Downing stopped him in the midst of his discourse with the question: "Doesn't Brother Jeter wear collars?" On learning that he did not, she said: "Well, he must have some. I don't know how he can get along without them." "See here, child," said the Deacon, and endeavored to renew his argument; but the good sister would not hear it. He was silenced and gave up the controversy, but was neither convinced nor satisfied. Some time afterwards he asked for a letter of dismission from the Morattico church, of which I was pastor, and of which he had been an honored deacon for thirty years, to join a church nearer to him, in an adjoining county. Convenience was the plea for the change, but the brethren all thought that the trouble about the collar was at the bottom of it.

It was not long before the old brother learned that wearing a collar was not the worst evil that could afflict a church. He soon got into great difficulties in his new relation—difficulties in nowise affecting his Christian character, but greatly disturbing the repose of his old age. Years before I left the Neck he had entirely forgiven, or at least overlooked, my sin of wearing a collar, and was in cordial friendship with me.

When Dr. Reed, of London, visited the camp-meeting in the Neck he spent a night with Deacon Norris, and, in his report of the visit, gave a very interesting account of the Deacon and of his conversation and hospitality. We have room for only a paragraph:

"After taking repast, and joining in prayer with a cluster of our friends beneath a leafy alcove at the back of one of the tents (at the camp-ground), we started for Deacon Norris' residence. His lad drove me in a chaise, while he rode behind with a parent's care to see that all was done well. He exchanged pleasant words with me as occasion allowed, and ever and anon was giving his cautions to the driver: 'Now, boy, mind those stumps—take care of those roots—keep a tight rein here'—and the whole was done in evident reference to me. When we alighted he received me to his house with that simplicity and kindness which are the essence of all true politeness. He took my hand, and with a beaming face and tearful eye, he said: 'Now, sir, this is your home while you stay; and the longer you stay the more I shall be honored. A plain place; but all of it-servants, house, garden-is yours. Only make me happy by letting me know what you want.' I had small reply to offer. All this was said in the deep and wild forest, and the manner and expression would not have dishonored St. James'; it affected me with tenderness and surprise."

It is, perhaps, more than thirty years since Deacon Norris went to his long home. He was a good man, but had his imperfections—peculiarities, perhaps, they should be called. His faults, if faults they were, were virtues over-rigid hardened into wrong. His conscientiousness was noble; but he erred in wishing to make his conscience the rule for other people's conduct. His deep convictions were commendable, but they betrayed him into intolerant dogmatism. He could never have been a great man; but with better training and under other circumstances he would have been a noble specimen of Christain piety, and might have been a martyr in the cause of Christ. With all his oddities, I loved and venerated him, and cherish unfeigned respect for his memory.

#### NORTHERN NECK INCIDENTS.

URING my residence in Northumberland I visited Williamsburg to assist in settling a church difficulty. I was accompanied by my friend, Brodie S. Hull, a cousin of my wife. On our return we crossed the Rappahannock river in a ferry-boat from Urbanna, Middlesex county. At this point the river is four or five miles wide, and, being open to the Chesapeake bay, is liable to be very rough. When we reached the mouth of Urbanna creek there was a dark and threatening cloud lying off to the west, and I said to the ferrymen: "I fear we shall have bad weather before we can get across the river." They replied, cheerfully, that there was no danger, for that we would reach the opposite shore before the cloud could come up. I was silent, supposing that they understood the situation better than I did. We dashed into the river, but before we got more than half way across it the storm was upon us in great fury. The wind blew down the river directly toward the bay, and soon the billows were surging high and angry. ferrymen were at the oars, my friend Hull had hold of the helm, and my lot was to hold the horses. The boat was dashed hither and thither as if it had been a cork, and the horses were unable to keep their feet. At one time I was prostrate in the bottom of the boat with a horse lying on each side of me, and escaped damage only by being more active than the horses. I was on my feet before they had begun to struggle. The ferrymen lost heart, and for a time we were at the mercy of the To increase our peril, one of them dropped his oar, and barely succeeded, by a desperate effort, in recovering it. After painful delay, and a struggle for life, the rowers succeeded in changing the course of the boat so as to quarter the billows and land her far below the point of destination.

After hours of anxious toiling we safely reached the shore.

I have been exposed to many perils, by land and water, but probably never to a greater than this. At one time our destruction seemed inevitable, and it was a wonderful mercy that we were delivered. I have never felt greater joy than when my feet touched the Lancaster shore, and it was, I trust, a joy not unmixed with gratitude to God, and an earnest purpose to dedicate anew to him a life which he had so graciously preserved.

There was one feeling in my experience in the hour of danger which, so far as I am informed, was peculiar to myself. It is said that misery loves company. In my case the saying was more than verified. I felt a pleasure, not only that my friend Hull was sharing with me in the danger and alarm of the voyage, but that if I should die he would be my companion in death. I cherished the hope that beyond the mysterious boundary of time, on the shore of eternity, we should have a companionship that would serve to break the loneliness of our situation. Whether there was any foundation for that hope my friend now knows better than I do. He was a consistent professor of religion, and died while he was comparatively young, and, though I did not accompany him, he was, I trust, escorted by angels to the paradise of God.

A singular event occurred in my ministry while I lived in the Neck. I had an appointment to preach at White Chapel, in the upper end of Lancaster county. It was an old colonial edifice, large, much out of repair, and little used. The day was showery, but the congregation, considering the weather, was good. My text was Luke xiii: 24: "Strive to enter in at the strait gate; for many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able." I had proceeded some distance in my discourse, with usual freedom, when a large mass of plaster, more than two feet square and several inches thick, fell from the lofty ceiling, just grazing me in its descent. Had it fallen on my head it would probably have killed me, or would certainly have stunned and seriously wounded me. I was alarmed, but, finding the danger over, I quickly proceeded to make extempore remarks, suggested by the event, on the perils to

which we are constantly exposed, the uncertainty of life, and the importance of being always prepared for our end.

At that period of my ministry I preached not without careful preparation for the work, but without taking notes into the pulpit. On this occasion I had read my text, shut up the Bible, and had no memento of my discourse. When I had finished my unpremeditated remarks I essayed to recommence my sermon, but all recollection of the text and subject was entirely effaced from my mind. I stood and endeavored to recall the theme of my discourse. My efforts were vain, and my situation was becoming more and more embarrassing. I turned to the left, where sat my friend, Deacon Dunaway, and asked him if he could tell me what I was preaching about. He seemed to be paralyzed, or rather petrified, by the question. He sat with his eyes and mouth stretched wide open, without moving a muscle. He would have been a model of a perplexed mind for an artist. Finding no help from that source I gradually turned to the right. Deacon Norris, a careful hearer, and noted for remembering the texts of sermons, seeing that I was directing my eyes toward him, cast his head down on the back of the pew before him, as much as to say, "Don't ask me for your text." So thoroughly were the congregation in sympathy with me in the alarm caused by the falling of the plaster, and the remarks which the event had suggested, that probably not one of them remembered my text.

Just as I was about to take my seat the text and my discourse flashed on my mind, and I commenced my remarks precisely at the point at which they had been interrupted, and finished my sermon with freedom and a solemnity perhaps intensified by the danger which I had escaped.

I have heard of two ministers who, having forgotten their texts, were able to continue their discourses because they were endowed with remarkable volubility. For my part, I could not preach without a text, and could not always proceed even with one. Not very long after my removal to the Neck I had an appointment for preaching at the house of Deacon Dunaway. The morning was inclement, the congregation was not

large, and my mind, when I attempted to preach, was so dark and my heart so apathetic that I deemed it better to stop, and I called on the brethren to sing. Deacon Norris, perceiving my embarrassment, fell on his knees, saying, "Let us pray." The audience was in full sympathy with the proposal, and he offered one of the simplest, most tender and moving prayers that I have ever heard. At its close almost every person present was in tears, and the time spent in singing and prayer proved to be unusually profitable. Several persons made a profession of faith in Christ, of whom, if I rightly remember, Dr. Kirk—the most valuable of all the converts made during my residence in the Neck—was one.

God wisely orders all events. My failure to preach at Deacon Dunaway's seemed to result in great good. Who can say what eternity may reveal of the benefits flowing from the falling of the plaster at White Chapel and the embarrassment that followed?

At the camp-meeting of 1834 a young man was present whose case awakened a deep interest, and which I have frequently had occasion to mention. He was unusually handsome, genteel in his appearance, intelligent, amiable, dignified, and moral. He was a mechanic, but at the head of his business—a very important business. He had not long been a resident of the Neck, but had gained many friends. He came to the meeting with the purpose of remaining on the ground. An unusual desire was awakened for his conversion. many, special prayer was made for him. Uncommon pains were taken by ministers and laymen to interest him on the subject of religion. He listened respectfully to all that was said to him concerning it. He admitted its necessity, and seemed to be on the point of yielding to the claims of the gospel. Sometimes tears would arise in his eyes, but he would wipe them away as if he thought it unmanly to weep. meeting closed leaving him thoughtful, serious, almost persuaded to be a Christian, but still unconverted. It was a grief to many that he had not given his heart to God, but it was earnestly hoped that the impressions made on his mind would result in his conversion.

At the close of the meeting I left the Neck, and was absent several weeks. On my return, before I reached my home, I heard that the promising young man was dead. I was shocked by the intelligence, and hastened to obtain minute and accurate information concerning his sickness and death. I learned that soon after the meeting referred to above he was seized with bilious fever, common in that region in autumn. Every effort was made which kindness and skill could suggest to check the disease, but made in vain. The sufferer was delirious from the commencement of the attack till a short time before his death. Then the fever having abated, and nature being almost exhausted, he awoke to a momentary consciousness. Finding himself covered with blistering plasters, he felt his pulseless wrists, and exclaimed with a faltering voice: "I am dyingand, great God! what a death!" These were his last words. In a few moments he was delirious again, and soon he passed into eternity. The young man, in the bloom of life and among comparative strangers, died a hopeless death.

After some weeks I preached his funeral sermon from Mark x: 21: "One thing thou lackest." I endeavored to impress on the minds of the young that piety—supreme devotion to Christ—is man's supreme necessity, for which neither amiableness, nor morality, nor wealth, nor honor, nor all together, can be any substitute. As no relatives of the deceased were present, I spoke with a freedom and fullness in which, under other circumstances, I could not have indulged. It was one of the saddest funeral services in which I have ever been engaged. Often, in the course of my ministry, I have told the story of the poor young man as a warning to those who procrastinate their repentance, and not unfrequently with the most solemn and, I have reason to think, with the most beneficial effects. I would not affirm that that lovely young man was lost, but who for a world would die such a death?

#### XLI.

#### RESIDENCE IN RICHMOND.

I REMOVED to this city at the beginning of the year 1836, and became the pastor of the First Baptist church. immediate predecessor in the office was Rev. I. T. Hinton. He was an Englishman, a brother of John Howard Hinton, quite distinguished as a preacher among the English Baptists, and of no mean reputation as an author on both sides of the Atlantic. Isaac T. was a man of sharp intellect, fair education, and of admirable gifts for organizing. In this quality he differed widely from his predecessor, Rev. John Kerr, with whom he served a year as an assistant pastor, and who, with eminent qualifications for gathering a church, was little fitted for training it for efficiency. Hinton resigned his charge after a pastorate of two years to remove to the city of Chicago, mainly on account of his aversion to slavery. After a few years' experience he learned that slavery was not the only nor the worst evil that could afflict a church, and returning to the South fell a victim to yellow fever in New Orleans in 1847, and his death was widely and deeply lamented.

I found the church in an admirable state of organization from the labors and timely suggestions of its late pastor. It was divided into districts, the members in every district placed under suitable supervision, plans for usefulness judiciously arranged, and the church manual containing the name and residence of every member, and much valuable information for the assistance of the pastor. The church was as systematically organized as any well-drilled military company.

On the first Lord's-day morning of January I preached my introductory sermon before the church from I Corinthians ii: 2: "For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified." In considering the theme of the apostolic ministry, "Jesus Christ, and him crucified," I

noticed its extent, importance, and efficacy, and closed with remarks pertinent to my entrance on the pastorate. At night appropriate services were held in the church, in which Elders J. B. Taylor, Addison Hall, Samuel Cornelius, W. F. Nelson, and H. Keeling participated, all of whom have closed their labors and entered on their reward.

It is not my purpose to give a detailed account of my life while pastor of the church, but to record my recollections of some prominent events and my views of a few distinguished persons with whom I was associated during that period. It will be necessary, however, for the better understanding of this record, that I should give a brief sketch of my pastorate. My connection with the church continued about thirteen years and a half. It was an eventful and important period of my life. I was brought into a new, responsible, and difficult sphere of activity. My relations with the church throughout the whole time of my pastorate were harmonious and pleasant. It was to me a season of great anxiety and toil, as well as of hopefulness and pleasure. My labors and faithfulness were not so great as they might have been, but at their close I had little cause of self-reproach. I had endeavored, with diligence and earnestness, to perform the varied and onerous duties of my office.

During the time I was called to taste the bitter cup of affliction. My mother, for whom I cherished the most filial and tender affection, passed to her long home. A man may have many friends, but he can have only one mother; and he that loses a good mother sustains an irreparable loss. It has been to me a life-long grief that my mother did not live until I had some opportunity of requiting her many years of toil, care, and kindness on my behalf. It is to me, in my old age, a great pleasure that I have no recollection of having disobeyed her or uttered a disrespectful word to her. In the same period I followed to the grave my second wife, Sarah Ann, nee Gaskins, after a protracted illness, and the most triumphant death which, in a ministry of more than fifty years, it has been my privilege to witness. I really do not know how such calmness,

such hope, such joy, such perfect self-possession, such courage and elevation of mind as she displayed in the immediate and certain prospect of death, on the part of one in the meridian of life, could be accounted for, except on the supposition that she was sustained and cheered by divine grace. The hour of her death was the hour of her triumph and rapture, and she might well have been conveyed to the tomb—as I heard Spurgeon express the wish that he might be—in a white hearse, adorned with white plumes and drawn by white horses, and accompanied by a procession with songs of triumph and the sound of trumpets. Her death was a fitting end of her life of unostentatious and fervent piety.

My success in this pastorate, while it was not commensurate with my desire for usefulness, called for devout thanksgiving to God. During this period the church enjoyed several precious revivals and received large and valuable accessions. I baptized about 1,000 persons, white and colored, in connection with the church, many of whom became ministers of the word of God—among them I may mention Dr. Garlick, of this city. and Dr. Henson, of Philadelphia. The church, numbering about 300 members when I took charge of it, contained more than 600 when I resigned my pastorate. It would be invidious to compare those I left in the church with those whom I found in it, but this much may be fairly said: Many of the members introduced into it during my labors were noble specimens of piety and activity, who have continued, through the long period of thirty years, and under the pastorates of Manly, Burrows, and Warren, to be pillars in the house of God. The most important event of my ministry was probably the organization of the First African church, of which I purpose to furnish an account in my next article.

In the early part of the year 1849 I was invited to take charge of the Second Baptist church in St. Louis as a successor of Dr. S. Lynd. To me few events could have been more unexpected than this request. I knew nothing of the church and the church knew little of me. For several reasons the call impressed me favorably. I had been long in Richmond,

and had but little prospect of doing more than maintaining the church in the measure of prosperity to which it had reached. I had visited St. Louis in the year 1844, and was profoundly impressed with its importance as a field of evangelical labor. I then thought, as I still think, that no place on the continent offered or could offer greater prospects for permanent success in ministerial labor. After considerable delay, great anxiety, and much doubt as to my duty, I accepted the call.

Had I formed the slightest conception of the pain of separating from a people among whom I had so long and pleasantly labored, and who had for me, as I had for them, so tender an affection, I should not for a moment have thought of breaking the ties which united us. I took leave of them at the close of an afternoon communion service. I may be permitted to say that I, at least, have never passed through such a trial. There were the aged brethren and sisters, with whom I had taken sweet counsel; there were the younger members converted under my ministry, baptized by my hands, and edified by my instructions; there were many whom I had united in the bonds of matrimony, and more still whose loved ones I had followed with tearful eyes to the tomb, and to all these, at the close of a solemn communion season, I was to extend the parting hand. It was too much to endure. Tears, and sighs, and sobs made a scene such as I have rarely, perhaps never, on any other occasion witnessed. I lamented my determination to leave the church, but I had gone too far to think of retracing my steps. I had promised to go to St. Louis, and to St. Louis I must go. In a future article I may give some account of the events which I remember there.

Great changes have taken place in the First church since I resigned the oversight of it. Its prosperity has been maintained and increased. Under different pastorates its membership has been augmented, and their resources and efficiency, notwithstanding the great calamities through which the city has passed, have not been diminished. The continued vitality and fruitfulness of the old church call for thanksgiving to the Lord. Where is the church of which I took charge in 1836?

A few of the members—perhaps a dozen—are now, with gray locks, wrinkled countenances, and tottering steps, approaching the end of their journey, while the main body of the sacramental host have passed the river and are reposing on the shore that lies not within the range of mortal vision. The bodies of many of them I followed to the cemetery while I was pastor of the church, and one after another, and attended by one pastor or another, they have been removed to the city cemeteries.

# XLII.

# THE ORGANIZATION OF THE FIRST AFRICAN CHURCH IN RICHMOND.

WHEN I came to Richmond the First church contained about 2,000 colored members, and the number was considerably augmented while they were under my charge. They were a heavy burden on the white members of the church. Beside the expense of providing for their instruction, much time and labor were devoted to the exercise of discipline among them.

There were several important reasons for organizing them into a separate and independent church. The space allotted for their use in the house of worship was utterly insufficient for their accommodation. The style of preaching demanded by the white congregation was not well adapted to the instruction of the colored people. Besides, it was quite impossible for the pastor, with a large white congregation under his care, to pay much attention to the necessities of the colored portion of his flock. A pastor who should devote his whole time, or the chief part of it, to their interests seemed to be imperatively demanded.

There were, however, very serious difficulties in the way of organizing a colored church. A house of worship, of no inconsiderable extent, would be needed for their accommodation, and the means of procuring it could not be easily obtained. There was, however, a more formidable obstacle to the enterprise than the lack of money. Public sentiment was opposed to it. The unfortunate Southampton insurrection had led to the enactment of stringent laws in regard to the assembling of negroes for religious worship or any other purpose. They were forbidden to meet in any considerable number except in the presence and under the supervision of white persons. The abolition excitement at the North was producing a most un-

pleasant counter-excitement at the South. All efforts for meliorating the condition of the slaves were opposed by many on the ground that they favored the designs of the abolitionists. Many pious people looked with distrust, if not with hostility, on all new measures for the religious instruction of the negroes. All classes of irreligious persons—sceptics, gamblers, bar-keepers, and the like, of whom Richmond at that time had her full share—were bitter and fierce in their opposition to the proposed organization. They were hostile, indeed, to all religion, but as the white churches were too well fortified by public sentiment to be safely attacked, they concentrated their opposition against the proposed African church, and appealed to the fears excited by the recent insurrection, and to the feeling of indignation prevailing against the abolitionists, to prevent the execution of the scheme.

The church, after much anxious consultation, resolved to purchase a lot, build a new house, and make arrangements for the exclusive occupancy of the old house by the colored portion of the church. To this resolution we are indebted for the spacious and solid building now known as the First Baptist church, at the corner of Broad and Twelfth streets, and for the still more capacious edifice called the First African church. standing on the ground long occupied by the old and venerable Baptist church, in which sat for a time the distinguished Convention of 1829-'30, which remodeled the State Constitution, and on whose floor were laid the dead and dying at the time of the memorable conflagration of the theatre. The new house was built by great exertions and great sacrifices, in which the noble sisters bore a conspicuous part. Deacons James Sizer and Archibald Thomas, by their liberality and their personal attentions, contributed largely to the completion and excellent arrangements of the building. It is proper, too, to say that to Mr. James Thomas, Jr., then just commencing his successful financial career, more than to any other man, living or dead, have the colored people been indebted for the valuable house which they long occupied, and which has been succeeded by their present edifice, undoubtedly the largest house of worship

in the State. The old house and lot were valued by impartial judges, the church made a contribution of \$3,000 to secure the property for the use of the colored people, and the owners of slaves were solicited to aid in the enterprise. The personal application to them for help was assigned to Mr. Thomas, and right nobly and most successfully did he perform his task. His acquaintance with the tobacco merchants and manufacturers gave him advantage for the work which few possessed and which only he was willing to employ.

The African church was organized in the year 1842. Many difficulties had to be obviated in its organization. It was deemed wise to conform the church to the State laws and the municipal regulations. Its meetings were held only in the day time, and in the presence of white persons. The discipline of the church was lodged in their own hands, but owing to their inexperience in ecclesiastical government it was deemed better that an appeal should be granted to aggrieved members to a strong white committee appointed by the mother church—a privilege which was probably never exercised. The law required that the religious instructor should be a white man, but if there had been no such restriction it would probably have been impossible to find a colored man suited for the office.

After some delay and much earnest inquiry, Rev. Robert Ryland, president of Richmond College, was elected to the office. His official duties were not onerous, and as his afternoons (Saturdays and Sundays) were unoccupied, and the pastorate would make no great draft on his intellectual powers, he was unanimously selected for the important post. Of all men he was best suited for it. Deriving his support from his college services, he demanded but a small salary of the church, and that he devoted to the promotion of their interests. The colored people were emotional, fond of excitement, and would have been pleased with a declamatory and superficial preacher. Dr. Ryland—not then Doctor, but he soon received the title—was an eminently plain, instructive, and practical preacher, dealing chiefly with the conscience rather than the passions. His aim was to make his hearers

think rather than to feel, and to act rather than to speculate. His ministry was precisely adapted to correct the errors and to repress the extravagances into which his hearers were prone to run.

The pastorate of Dr. Ryland was eminently successful. The colored people soon became convinced that he was their sincere friend, seeking not theirs, but them, and endeavoring by all means to promote their best interests. Great numbers were converted by his ministry and baptized by him. stated that other pastors had difficulty in persuading their hearers to be baptized, but that his greatest trouble was to prevent his hearers from being baptized prematurely. He continued his labors among his flock until, at the close of the late war, when the negroes were freed, our social and civil institutions were overthrown, and it was supposed by those who assumed to be the leaders of the colored people that they needed a pastor more in sympathy with the new order of things, and the Doctor quietly retired from the post which he had so long and so usefully filled. Multitudes of negroes here remember the faithful and disinterested labors of their old pastor with profound gratitude, and hold his name in the highest veneration.

The labors of Dr. Ryland contributed largely to the almost unparalleled religious prosperity of the colored people in this city. They have five large houses of worship and a membership of over 13,000; this number, however, is nominal rather than exact. It is not possible for the churches, in the homeless condition and with the migratory habits of their members, to keep exact registers of them. Still they approximate the number stated, and their progress in knowledge and efficiency is truly remarkable and gratifying. The organization of the First African church marks an era in the history of the evangelization of the colored people in this city. It may be proper to state that there were prosperous African churches in Norfolk and Petersburg, and perhaps other places, before one was formed here.

The reader may desire to know what was the result of the opposition to the organization of the African church. It led to

no violence, but continued for years to display itself in constant watching for violations of the laws, complaints, and reproaches. The high character of Dr. Ryland and his prudent course gradually, among all pious, and even considerate people, quelled opposition and secured their confidence in the wisdom and usefulness of the measure. Attempts were made to have its active supporters indicted by the grand jury, but they failed.

I desire to repeat a fact in honor of Rev. William S. Plumer which I have several times published. While the formation of the African church was in contemplation, as I was desirous to have the sympathy and countenance of the Protestant pastors in the enterprise, I consulted some of them on the subject, and was advised to call a meeting of the clergy and ask their advice. When I mentioned the matter to Dr. Plumer, then pastor of the First Presbyterian church of this city, and a very popular preacher, he said: "Don't do it. The clergy may decide against your plan, but it is right. The law is in your favor. Go forward in the work, and if you have trouble I will stand by you." When he heard that an effort was being made to secure an indictment from the grand jury against the persons who had the meetings of the church in charge, the Doctor came to me and said: "I wish you to understand that in any difficulties you may have concerning the African church I am to go halves with you." It was a noble offer, and as honest and firm as it was noble. There were other ministers. I had reason to suspect, who would, from sectarian influence, have been quite pleased if the enterprise had ended in defeat and reproach.

# XLIII.

# THE WAR ON THE THEATRE.

THE burning of the theatre in this city, in the year 1811, was the most fearful tragedy which occurred in the country during my youth. Since then steamboat and railroad disasters and terrible conflagrations have been so multiplied that they have ceased to awaken much interest, except among persons who are directly or indirectly concerned in them. We now hear of the sinking of a noble ocean steamer, with hundreds of valuable passengers on board, and hardly deem it necessary to inquire for her name, the latitude in which she sunk, or the causes of the direful catastrophe. It was far otherwise when the theatre was burned. The whole country was filled with amazement and sorrow. For weeks it was almost the only theme of conversation for hundreds of miles around the scene of the disaster.

I well remember when an uncle, during the gleeful Christmas days, brought from the post-office the frightful intelligence that the theatre in Richmond had been burned and a large number of citizens and visitors had perished in the flames. It made a profound impression on my boyish imagination. Of such a calamity I had never heard before. Of a theatre I had little or no knowledge, but I had a vivid conception of the horrors of being consumed in a burning building. No event in all my early years produced such a deep, pervasive, and enduring impression in the State as did the conflagration of the theatre and the deplorable sufferings and losses by which it was accompanied.

When I first visited the city, no spot so impressed me with solemnity and awe as the vestibule of the Monumental church, standing on the spot occupied by the ill-fated theatre, and covering the ashes and bones of those who perished in its conflagration. The general impression was that the burning of

the theatre was a clear manifestation of its divine condemnation. This mode of reasoning was not new. In the days of Jesus there were persons who believed that the Galileans whose blood had mingled with their sacrifices, and the eighteen who were slain by the falling of the tower in Siloam, were sinners above all men, because they suffered such things. The Savior corrected the mistake. "I tell you nay," said he; they were not the chief sinners. The burning of a theatre no more proves that theatrical exhibitions are wrong than the burning of a church proves that the preaching of the gospel is wrong. For a time, however, there was no desire among the citizens of Richmond for theatrical amusements. By degrees the terrors of the burning theatre faded from the public memory, and another theatre was erected in the city.

In the winter of 1837-'38 theatrical exhibitions were not only re-established, but largely patronized in the city. Many of the plays were believed to be of demoralizing influence, and some of the scenes offensive to a refined and virtuous taste. Several of the city pastors deemed it their duty to make united efforts to arrest what appeared to them to be the licentious and demoralizing influence of theatrical amusements. The Rev. Dr. W. S. Plumer, then in the vigor of his manhood, led the assault. He preached in his church, on Franklin below Governor street, to a large congregation, from Matt. vi: 13: "Lead us not into temptation." I did not hear the sermon, but, judging from the abilities of the preacher and from common report, I have no doubt that he made a vivid exhibition of the temptations and dangers connected with attendance on theatrical amusements as they were then conducted, and the duty of all to avoid evils from which they prayed to be delivered. Rev. W. A. Smith, D. D., then stationed at Trinity Methodist church, on Franklin street, founded his discourse against theatrical amusements on Gal. v: 19-21. This sermon I heard. It was delivered to a crowded and deeply interested audience. The aim of the preacher was to show that theatrical amusements originated in human depravity, and intensified the evil from which they flowed. Wherever there were theatres, grogshops, houses of licentiousness, and other places of dissipation and vice were sure to flourish. Of the sermon of Dr. Woodbridge, of the Monumental church, I have no definite recollection, but infer from his intelligence and piety that it was a well-directed and vigorous attack on the evils of theatre-going.

Of my own sermon on the subject, as I remember it more distinctly, I may be indulged in giving a fuller account. It was the second in the series, and delivered on a Sunday evening, in the old First Baptist church, on the spot now occupied by the First African, crowded to its utmost capacity. My text was I Thess. v: 22: "Abstain from all appearance of evil." After a brief exposition of the text I attempted to show that theatrical entertainments have been condemned by great numbers of the wisest and best men of every age; that they are an amusement utterly worthless to society; that they involve an enormous and unjustifiable expenditure of money; that they have a strong tendency to deterioration; that they are manifestly of demoralizing influence, and that they tend to the subversion of national prosperity and independence. The effect of my sermon was greatly increased by a reminiscence whether impromptu or premeditated I cannot now say—with a reference to which I closed my discourse. At the burning of the theatre the dead, the dying, and suffering were laid upon the floor of the church in which I was speaking. Its walls had reverberated with the groans of the dying and the screams of the afflicted from the well-remembered theatrical catastrophe. The very floor occupied by the crowded audience had been stained with the blood of the unfortunate devotees of the bewitching amusement. I made such use as I could of these startling facts to dissuade my hearers from attending theatres. It was no proof of my power as a speaker that facts so solemn and so pertinent to the occasion, brought suddenly to the attention of the hearers, produced a deep impression. Of the merits of the sermon I need not speak. In a few days after its delivery I was requested by a number of gentlemen, among whom were several prominent members of the Legislature, to furnish a copy of it for publication. It had been preached

from not very copious notes, but I reduced it to writing, and a large edition of it was promptly printed and widely circulated, not a copy of which is now within my reach.

The managers of the theatre resolved to retaliate on the parsons. A play was selected or prepared as a burlesque on the sermons which had been preached against theatrical entertainments. I had often expressed my pleasure that a pun could not be made on my name, but I had no expectation of having the practical advantage of it which I experienced on this occasion. In the notice of the retaliatory play the names of the preachers—Plumer (plumber), Smith, and Woodbridge, in their common acceptation—were ingeniously wrought, printed in large capitals, and posted all over the city, to the amusement of many. My name, having no meaning in English, was omitted in the burlesque. Possibly I may attribute to the lack of meaning in my name what was due to its want of importance.

Many years have passed since the war on the theatre, and it may be quite natural to inquire whether time and observation have wrought any change in my views of theatrical amusements. There were arguments and statements in my sermon which, if I were to deliver it now, I should deem it proper to modify; but as to the injurious influence of theatrical entertainments my views have undergone no change. There is no evil in writing, reading, or acting plays, provided they are of good moral tendency; but theatres, as they are commonly conducted, are of demoralizing influence. Early convinced on this point, I have never attended a theatrical exhibition. I am, therefore, entirely dependent on the testimony of others for my opinion on this subject. I know how liable men's minds are to be warped by their tastes, training, and associations. It would be easy to find witnesses of equal intelligence and candor on both sides of this question. I have, however, found the most satisfactory testimony on the subject where I least expected to obtain it.

I was acquainted with the late Mrs. William F. Rifchie (previously Mrs. Mowatt)—herself an actress of high character and

218

of no mean abilities. She informed me that when she was in England she spent some weeks in the family of McCready, the most celebrated tragedian of his age, and among the most gifted of any age. He had a large family of daughters—beautiful, cultivated, refined, and interesting. She stated, all unconscious of the bearing of her testimony on the moral influence of the theatre, that he would not allow his daughters to attend it. He permitted each one, as she attained a certain age, to go once to it, that she might have some knowledge of its mysteries; but she must never go again.

The testimony is conclusive. If any man understood the influence of the theatre, McCready did. He possessed eminent abilities, and had ample opportunities to learn all the secrets and tendencies of theatrical entertainments. His opinion was formed under no bias against theatres. He was indebted to them for his wealth, reputation, and influence. His daughters derived their refinement and their rank in society from their father's histrionic art. He was the prince of the stage—admired, caressed, and honored wherever he appeared. Yet this eminent tragedian forbade his daughters to attend the theatre, even when he was the star actor. Why did he do it? Surely because he knew that it was no fit place for refined and modest ladies. There they are liable to hear jests and innuendoes, and to see sights from which maiden eyes should be averted. The case is clear that McCready considered that the instruction and amusement afforded by the drama would not compensate for the evil influences of attendance on the theatre. If that was true of the attendance on the theatres where McCready was the presiding genius, how much more obviously must it be true of theatres designed to minister to the tastes and satisfy the demands of the vulgar and the vicious?

# XLIV.

#### RICHMOND COLLEGE.

THE Virginia Baptist Education Society (after many years merged into the Education Part of the Education Part merged into the Education Board of the Baptist General Association of Virginia) was formed in the old Second Baptist church of this city at an anniversary meeting of the Association, June, 1830. It seems, from the excellent Life of Rev. James B. Taylor, by his son, Dr. George B. (pp. 88, 89), that Bro. Taylor retained a more minute recollection of the circumstances which led to the formation of the society than I had done. He states that as he and I were travelling from the Northern Neck to this city we discussed the means of educating our young ministers, and resolved to organize, if possible, a society for promoting the object. A meeting was held early Monday morning, before the General Association convened for business, to consider the subject. Speeches were made, and a committee was appointed to draft a constitution for a society, and in the afternoon another meeting was convened, at which the constitution was read and adopted, a large number of members was obtained, officers were chosen, and several hundreds of dollars were secured to aid in the education of young ministers.

Various reasons were offered for the formation of the society. The importance of adopting means for the education of the rising ministry was conceded by all. The Columbian College, District of Columbia, opened its doors, free of cost for tuition, to all ministers of the gospel, but most of our young ministers were unprepared to enter its classes, and could not be fitted to do it without some special provision for their training. Besides, it was thought that arrangements could be made in Virginia for their preparatory instruction much cheaper than they could be made in Washington city. These arguments, however, were by no means satisfactory to some of the brethren. They feared that the enterprise would interfere with the interests of the Co-

lumbian College, of which they were earnest friends. Many of the older brethren doubted the wisdom of the measure, if they did not directly oppose it. Rev. Robert Ryland, then recently graduated in the College, and quite alive to its interests, and destined to be one of the foremost in promoting the objects of the society, took no part in its formation, and looked with distrust, if not with hostility, on its plans. Whether the measure was wise or unwise, it is now too late to consider.

In a short time half a dozen or more students for the ministry were placed under charge of Rev. Edward Baptist, of Powhatan county. They were, no doubt, well instructed, for their teacher was a scholar, a fine preacher, and a most genial and pleasant companion. An event occurred in this school which may be properly mentioned. Among the students was a Bro. Allgood. He was a resident of Lunenburg county, the first person whom I baptized, and a most exemplary and promising young man. By some chance, but without fault on his part, he offended a rash and imperious young fellow, who resolved to chastise him. Preparing for the execution of his purpose, and watching for an opportunity to fulfill it, he proceeded to inflict stripes on the pious student, who bore the insult and outrage with Christian patience and gentleness. The sympathy of the community was generally and strongly with the injured Allgood, and public sentiment fiercely condemned the desperado by whom he was feloniously assaulted. He was indicted, but, owing to some defect in the law, or the failure to enforce it, he was not punished with the severity due to his crime.

In the year 1832 the society purchased a farm about four miles from the city, just beyond Young's mill-pond, for the purpose of establishing a manual labor school. Rev. Robert Ryland, pastor of the Baptist church in Lynchburg, was called to take charge of it, and accepted the call. He was, for a time, assisted in his work by Rev. Eli Ball, a brother whose scholarship was various rather than profound, but whose attainments were, doubtless, equal to the demands of his pupils. What he lacked in thoroughness of knowledge was fully supplied

by the blandness of his manners and his fondness of teaching.

At that time there was quite a mania in the country about manual labor schools. They sprang up all over the land. was fondly hoped that young men, by well-directed labors, when not engaged in their studies, might earn their support, or a large portion of it. The most extravagant praises of the system appeared in the public papers. The scheme quickly and utterly failed under the management of the Virginia Baptist Education Society. Its failure might have been easily foreseen. Some of the students were industrious, and others were lazy; some had been trained to labor, and others had not; some were strong and active, and others were delicate and feeble, and to require all to labor for the same remuneration was unequal and not adapted to encourage exertion. Preparations had to be made in one session for the crop of the next, and students were not inclined to labor for so distant and uncertain a benefit. Besides, the time of vacation was that which called for the most careful attention and the most earnest exertions. Farming and gardening, without a head to plan and labor at command, and the stimulus of self-interest to impel, and ceaseless attention, can never be profitable. After a few years' trial it was found that the desultory labor of students scarcely paid the unavoidable expenses of cultivation. Manual labor schools, as did Morus multicaulis a few years later, fell into universal neglect.

If the labor department was not to be kept up, the farm near Young's pond was evidently not the place for the school. It was too far from the city, whence the school must draw its supplies, and whither the students must resort for public religious worship and to find congenial society. The necessity of removing the school nearer to the city was apparent to all.

In the year 1835 the Education Society held its anniversary in the city of Richmond, and appointed a committee, consisting of Col. Thomas Hudgins (then wealthy, and a warm friend of the society), Rev. James B. Taylor, and myself, who made up in zeal for the cause what we lacked in cash, to select and purchase a site for the school nearer to the city. After due

examination we contracted for "Columbia," the private residence of the Haxall family, by far the most attractive residence in the neighborhood of Richmond—the present site of the College—for the sum of \$10,500. This was a heavy burden for the society to assume, but by the liberality and exertions of its friends it was paid according to contract.

For some years the school, called "The Baptist Seminary," was continued at Columbia, under the supervision of President Ryland, with assistant teachers. It was prosperous, and many of our most valuable ministers received their education, wholly or in part, in its classes. It was soon felt, however, that the institution needed a charter. It held its property by an insecure tenure, and it could not, under the laws of the State, collect bequests. Several legacies were lost for want of legal authority to compel their payment. If a charter was obtained, it seemed desirable that it should have all the privileges usually granted to colleges, that it might have room to grow, if need be, into a university. There were conflicting opinions among the friends of the school about the propriety of obtaining for it a college charter. The subject was earnestly discussed in the Education Society. It was maintained that the school was not a college, and could not, for a long time to come, be made one, except in name. Rev. A. M. Poindexter, one of the most formidable debaters that I have known, distinguished himself by his opposition to the measure. He amused the audience by comparing the little school with a college charter to a small boy clothed with his grandfather's greatcoat. In spite, however, of argument and ridicule, the charter was asked and obtained of the Legislature, and the name Baptist Seminary was gradually supplanted by Richmond College.

In the year 1851 a vigorous effort was made to raise \$100,000 for the endowment of the College. Rev. A. M. Poindexter was appointed an agent to carry into effect the scheme. A better selection for the work could not have been made. The proposed sum was secured in money or in bonds deemed equivalent to money. The loss of this endowment, and the damage to the college buildings and library, the changes and outrages

caused by the war, and the semi-centennial efforts for its reendowment, are recent events, which may be left for record among the recollections of some juvenile observer sixty or seventy years hence.

# XLV.

#### POPULAR DELUSIONS.

A BOUT forty years ago, before the completion of the rail-road from this city to Aquia creek, I was riding in a crowded stage-coach on the road from Fredericksburg to the steamboat landing on the Potomac. Most of the passengers were en route to the city of Baltimore to attend a Morus multicaulis convention. Morus multicaulis was the incessant theme of conversation in the coach. I had seen in the papers the long, outlandish name—meaning a mulberry of many stalks—but had taken no notice of it. Now I learned that it was an exotic, introduced into the country from the Eastperhaps from China—easily propagated, of rapid growth, and admirably suited to the nourishment of the silk-worm. It was proposed to commence the culture and manufacture of silk in the country. The quick and luxuriant growth of the Morus multicaulis, it was supposed, would greatly facilitate the introduction and success of the silk culture. The most extravagant anticipations were cherished by the sanguine members of the approaching convention of the wealth and prosperity with which the new enterprise would fill the country.

All the passengers were not equally hopeful of the profits of the *Morus multicaulis* speculation. The south of Europe and other Eastern countries had great advantages for the culture and manufacture of silk. The climates were favorable for the maturity and propagation of the silk-worm. Mulberry groves were numerous and flourishing, labor was cheap, capital was abundant and seeking investment at a small percentage, the people had the experience and accumulated skill of centuries in the manufacture of silks, the cost of their transportation to the commercial countries was very light, and it seemed improbable that Americans could successfully compete with the nations of the Old World in their long-cherished branch of business.

These suggestions seemed to the ardent *Morus multicaulisites* as the disturbed and gloomy dreams of *old fogies*—a vulgar phrase then just coming into use. To all these arguments the reply was easy. Boys and girls unfit for other service could feed the silk-worms, and ladies could wind the silk from the cocoon and weave it into beautiful fabrics. Employment, refinement, and wealth were results surely promised to flow from the culture of the prolific Eastern mulberry. For my own part, I had never before received a tithe of the instruction on the art of silk-making that I gained on that memorable journey.

The Baltimore Convention was not the only one held in the interest of the Morus multicaulis culture. Conventions were held in various places, attended numerously by men of intelligence, capital, and enterprise, to awaken and diffuse an interest in an employment that was expected to enrich all classes of society and every part of our country, especially our Southern country. The newspapers were filled with articles on the subject, setting forth in glowing terms the immense advantages of the proposed culture. The public was thoroughly aroused on the subject. All classes of people entered into the speculation. Women as well as men, and sober-minded farmers as well as enthusiastic adventurers, went into the cultivation of the Morus. Gardens as well as fields, and the choice spots on many farms, were planted in the gold-producing stalk. Travel where one might, he would see among the most carefully cultivated places the Morus multicaulis patches. As the plants were propagated from the buds, they were sold at the most fabulous prices. It was not uncommon for small lots-mere squares in gardens well set with the luxuriant plants—to be sold for hundreds, or even thousands, of dollars. A single stalk judiciously used might make a fortune. It was no uncommon thing for bold speculators to pay, or at least promise to pay, \$30,000 or \$40,000 for a small field covered with the precious growth. To intensify the excitement, in a short time specimens of domestic silk began to be exhibited as decisive proof that the Morus multicaulis could nourish the silk-worm, and that American industry and enterprise could manufacture its cocoons into

strong silk cloth, bearing about the same relation to the beautiful silk fabrics of the Old World as did our domestic cotton cloths at that time sustain to the tasteful imported calicoes.

The increase of the *Morus multicaulis* exceeded all computation. The country was covered with it. At the rate at which it increased it would have taken but few years to fill the globe with it. New Jersey, perhaps, took the lead in the speculation, but she was closely followed by Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and I know not how many States farther south.

Fortunately for the world, intense excitements do not last long. Wild speculations must soon run their course. The *Morus multicaulis* mania went through all its stages in two or three years. At first the buyers greatly exceeded the sellers in number, but in a short time the proportion between them was entirely changed. In the early summer I was in company with an intelligent gentleman from New Jersey. He informed me that the plant was abundant in that State, and that the growers of it were relying on Virginia for a market. It was obvious that the bubble was about to burst. I knew that the producers of it in Virginia were expecting to sell large quantities of it to the Jersey people.

About this time I travelled into some of the upper counties of the State, where the Morus had been planted on a grand scale. I resolved to indulge in a little pleasantry at the expense of the now somewhat dispirited speculators. I expressed my wish to purchase the plant. I was asked how much of the article I desired to obtain. I replied gravely that I would buy a very large quantity if I could obtain it on reasonable terms. It was amusing to see how the faces of the sellers brightened at the prospect of turning their mulberry plants into gold. They were more anxious to learn what I was willing to give for the trees than they were to state their prices. After exciting their expectation to the highest point, I offered them ten cents a hundred for their best plants. They saw at once that I was hoaxing them. The most amusing part of the story is that if they had accepted my offer I should have been seriously damaged, if not pecuniarily ruined.

Before autumn the bubble burst. Suddenly, completely, and permanently the golden dream ended. Scarcely any one gained by the speculation. Some who sold their *Morus multicaulis* crops for thousands of dollars invested their gains in larger fields of the mulberry plant and in costly cocooneries. For some years the *Morus* groves might be seen standing on almost every farm, but by degrees, with great reluctance and at considerable cost, they were grubbed up and the grounds used for more profitable products. Now a *Morus multicaulis* tree is rarely seen. The only thing that can be fairly said in favor of the speculation is that it was a delusion and not a fraud.

About the time of the Morus multicaulis excitement there was another popular delusion—less extensive, but not less wild and groundless. It was the gold mania. A gold mine was discovered, I think, in the county of Buckingham. It promised to be of great value. A distinguished mineralogist-I think Professor Silliman, of Yale College, Connecticut-was employed to examine the mine. He reported that it was very rich. In my trip with the persons en route to the Baltimore convention, referred to above, I heard an intelligent stranger, that I supposed to be Professor Silliman, say that he had examined the mine, and believed it to be the richest, or one of the richest, mines in the world. It was afterwards suspected that the mineralogist was guided in his examination by persons who knew where the deposits of gold might be found in the greatest abundance. Be that as it may, his scientific report produced a wild excitement. A mining company was formed of limited stock, in which the shares doubled and quadrupled in value in a few days. To increase the excitement, specimens of the precious metal were passed from hand to hand as earnests of the splendid fortunes within easy reach.

The strangest part of the story is that cautious, far-seeing men, who had laughed at the *Morus multicaulis* deception, were perfectly frantic with the gold speculation. They had not believed in the nursing of silk-worms, but gold was something they could see and handle, and the judgment of the renowned scientist might be safely trusted. They purchased

gold-mining stock at exorbitant prices, and urged their friends not to neglect the means of securing wealth. The most intense excitement prevailed throughout the State, and especially in Richmond. How could it be otherwise? Everybody knew the preciousness of gold, and science combined with commercial shrewdness to give assurance that it could be obtained in great abundance by a small outlay. Many bought stock, and all were looking forward hopefully to the golden harvest.

The gold bubble did not last so long as the silk bubble. The mining was not profitable. There was gold, precious gold, in the mine, but it required two dollars' worth of labor to obtain one dollar's worth of gold. In a few months the grand scheme collapsed, and the stock, which at one time could scarcely be obtained for love or money, would hardly have been accepted as a present. Some of the speculators might have been profited by the scheme, but its only benefit coming within my knowledge was the great amusement afforded by the disappointment of the sharp, careful, money-loving traders who had escaped so many snares and had so constantly reproved their neighbors for their incautious and reckless speculations to be caught in the most unpromising of all the traps.

#### XLVI.

# THE DIVISION OF THE TRIENNIAL CONVENTION.

A T the first Triennial Convention which I attended at the city of New York, in 1832, the elements of discord had begun to appear. Abolitionism was then in its incipiency. In the next meeting of the Convention, held in the city of Richmond, owing to its Southern location, and the decided preponderance of Southern influence, it did not show itself, though several leading abolitionists were present. At the Convention in Baltimore, in 1841, the subject of slavery began to be a disturbing element in the deliberations of the body. Conciliatory resolutions on the subject were adopted by an overwhelming majority. They did not extinguish, but merely repressed for a time, the smouldering fires.

When the Convention met in Philadelphia, in 1844, the abolition party had much increased in numbers and strength. was evident that an earnest conflict on the subject of slavery could not be avoided. The views of brethren were widely and irreconcilably variant concerning it. At the North many believed it to be "the sum of all villainies," the sin of all sins, and the one evil against which they should direct their heaviest moral batteries. Slaveholders they considered utterly unfit for the kingdom of heaven, and their contributions to the cause of missions a blight and a curse. These extreme views, however, were not in the ascendancy among Northern brethren. Generally, they held that slavery was an evil, a misfortune, to be deplored, but that slaveholders of the South, under their circumstances, might or might not sin in owning slaves. Their views amounted to this: that bad slaveholders were not worthy of Christian fellowship, but that good slaveholders were. remember distinctly that Dr. Wayland said: "I believe slavery

to be a sin, but consider many of the Southern slaveholders to be as free from the guilt of slavery as I am."

There were conflicting views on this subject among Southern as well as among Northern Baptists. None believed that slavery per se was sinful. All were of opinion that the interference of Northern people with Southern slavery was uncalled for, unwise, and injurious both to masters and slaves. Many looked on slavery as a great blessing, to be defended and perpetuated at all hazards. Others viewed it as a misfortune to be endured and made the best of, under the circumstances in which we were placed, and for the existence of which we were in nowise responsible. Not one in a thousand believed that slavery could be abolished without serious injury to both masters and slaves, with few or no compensating advantages to either party.

The Convention, composed of these heterogeneous elements, commenced its session with a reasonable prospect of discord and trouble. It was deemed necessary that Dr. Wm. B. Johnson, of South Carolina, a minister of fine attainments and an excellent presiding officer, who had acceptably served the Convention several sessions, should, as a peace-offering, decline a re-election. The abolitionists nominated Dr. B. T. Welch, of Albany, N. Y., and the conservatives Dr. F. Wayland, of Providence, R. I., for the presidency. Dr. Wayland was elected. He was an anti-slavery man, but eminently liberal in his views, conservative in his spirit, and conciliatory in his manners. He was as much opposed as any Southern man to the introduction of the subject of slavery into the Convention, or permitting it to interfere with the co-operation of Baptists, North and South, in the work of missions. The business of the Convention was conducted without serious trouble from the abolitionists. The body, being composed of members representing a considerable pecuniary contribution, was made up largely of conservative and prudent men.

The American Baptist Home Mission Society, differing little from a mass-meeting, was, from its very origin, the battle-field of the abolitionists and slaveholders. In this society occurred the memorable discussion in which the sentence, "Brother Jeter has the floor!" acquired such notoriety. The facts, as I remember them, are these: Deacon Heman Lincoln, of Boston, was in the chair. He was a noble layman, a gentleman of wealth, refined manners, high social position, a good parliamentarian, trained in the Massachusetts Senate, of which he had been a member. He was neither a slaveholder nor an abolitionist, but he valued men according to their intellectual and moral worth. The subject of slavery was under discussion—in what aspect I do not now remember—and several speeches had been made on it. I rose to speak, and the president accorded to me the floor. Instantly there was a vociferous demand that another should have it. He had risen several times, it was said, and failed to gain the eye of the speaker. It was insisted that his repeated attempts to gain the floor fairly entitled him to it. To all the demands and arguments the inflexible Deacon persistently cried: "Brother Jeter has the floor!" It is strange that persons having the slightest knowledge of parliamentary usage should have demanded the floor for the brother on that plea. If he had risen fifty times and failed to obtain the recognition of the presiding officer he would have had no ground for the claim. His frequent failures to obtain it might have been a plea for yielding it to him in courtesy, but they did not constitute the shadow of a claim to it as a matter of right. The firmness of the president prevailed.

After standing for half an hour, as I suppose, through a tumult unparalleled in my experience in deliberative bodies, the floor was reluctantly yielded to me. Under ordinary circumstances I should have been embarrassed and unable to proceed in the discussion; but several days of intense excitement had brought me to a point at which I could not be confused. I commenced my speech with deliberation, and continued it to the end with freedom and calmness. I could not repeat my arguments if I would, and I need not if I could. They were entirely satisfactory to those agreeing with me in opinion, and were probably not noticed by those who dissented from it. In truth, the excitement, though it was favorable to fervent speaking, was entirely adverse to candid hearing.

The meetings closed with no favorable indications of the future co-operation of the Baptists, North and South, in missions, home or foreign. Resolutions shortly afterwards adopted by the Alabama Baptist State Convention, or its Board (I do not recollect which), precipitated the division. The resolutions demanded of the Foreign Mission Board, in Boston, an explicit answer to the question whether a slaveholder would be appointed a missionary. The answer was promptly returned that he would not be. This decision terminated all hope of union between the Baptists of the two sections in missionary work. The Boston Board had been the most conservative of all our boards. It had been the very anchor of the Convention. This decision filled the brethren of the South with amazement and sorrow. It was not that slaveholders, under some circumstances, on account of prejudices against them, would not be appointed missionaries, but that, because of their relation to slavery, they could not be appointed. Slaveholding among the American Indians presented no barrier to usefulness; but slaveholders, even among them, could not be employed as missionaries. Further co-operation was impossible. It reduced the Southern Baptists to the condition of mere burden-bearers. They might contribute to the funds of the Convention—to this many of the abolitionists were opposed—but owning slaves, under whatever circumstances, precluded ministers from serving as missionaries. A meeting was immediately held by the brethren in Richmond, the action of the Board carefully considered, and a convention invited to assemble in Augusta, Ga., to decide what, under this new aspect of affairs, should be done.

Meanwhile, a called meeting of the General Board of the Triennial Convention was held in Providence, R. I., to confer on the proper action of the body in the exigency. Rev. James B. Taylor and myself, at the request of the brethren here, attended the meeting. We were most cordially and pleasantly entertained in the family of Dr. Wayland. I never saw so much of him as on this occasion, and I was deeply impressed by his large-hearted liberality and his sound wisdom. After free and full consultation with the brethren, especially Dr. Way-

land, a separation of the Baptists, North and South, was deemed best for all parties. Division was inevitable. If the Baptists of the South did not withdraw, it was foreseen that the abolitionists and conservatives of the North would be rent asunder in their churches, associations, and mission societies. Much as a sectional division was to be deplored, it was deemed far less injurious to our cause than a separation on the principle styled by the Presbyterians "elective affinity," and on which they had then recently divided. Taylor and myself returned to the South with the assurance of the wisest and most conservative of the Northern brethren that the formation of a Southern convention would meet their approbation and secure their earnest prayers for its success.

#### XLVII.

# THE FORMATION OF THE SOUTHERN BAP-TIST CONVENTION.

THE request for a convention to meet in the city of Augusta, Ga., in May, 1845, received a general and favorable response. A large delegation, amounting to about forty, went from Virginia and Maryland to the meeting. The journey was one of marked interest. It was performed by rail to Wilmington, North Carolina, and thence by steamer down the Cape Fear river, and along the Atlantic coast to Charleston, South Carolina. In our trip down the river all were cheerful, bright, and sociable, but we had scarcely reached the ocean before we were in a dreadful storm. One after another the passengers were seized with that most unpleasant disease, sea-sickness, and compelled to cast their dinners into the ocean, and retire to their berths or stretch themselves on settees in the saloon. At times the gunwale of the boat was lined with sufferers seeking relief by emptying their stomachs. Rev. D. Witt-afterwards Dr. Witt-wittily said to the captain: "You may put out the fires; we can carry on the boat by heaving." In the evening the table, long and crowded at dinner, was reduced to a few plates, and these were not in demand. Having recently passed safely along the coast in very tempestuous weather, I was not alarmed at the storm, and amused myself with the sufferings and fears of others, which I believed to be temporary, and, indeed, medicinal and disciplinary. About night, however, the storm increasing, I became very sick, to the no little amusement of my fellow-passengers who had been annoyed by my jests. Unable to find a lodging in the saloon, I was forced to retreat to the cabin. As I reached the foot of the gangway, overwhelmed with sickness, I cast myself on the nearest mattress. Fortunately for me it was midships, where the motion was slightest, and a free air was circulating. I was immediately relieved, and, falling asleep, did not awake until the storm was over, the sun was shining, and the boat was in the direct course to Charleston. I learned, however, that the tempest became exceedingly heavy, the boat was forced to scud before the wind, and very serious fears of a disastrous termination of the voyage were entertained by the inexperienced landlubbers.

The destruction of that living cargo would have been a great calamity to the Baptists of Virginia. Many of their wisest, most active, and most influential ministers and laymen were on board, and their loss would have been, for a time at least, irreparable. When the peril had passed this thought forced itself on our minds: If we had perished our fate would have been deemed decisive proof that slavery was wrong, and that God visited its defenders with a just and signal judgment. A thousand pulpits would have proclaimed the instructive lessons of the fearful providence. The reasoning would have been quite as logical as that of the Pharisees who inferred from the doom of the eighteen who were slain by the falling of the tower of Siloam, and of the unfortunate Galileans whose blood was mingled with the sacrifices of the temple, that they were sinners above all men because they suffered such things. There has been much reasoning of that kind in these latter days, which I forbear to mention.

A large and representative convention, from the South and Southwest, met in Augusta at the appointed time. There was no difference of opinion among the delegates as to the course to be pursued. The thought of remaining in connection with the Triennial Convention, except on terms of perfect equality with the non-slaveholding portion of it, was not entertained by a Southern Baptist for a moment. Dr. William B. Johnson, of South Carolina, was chosen president of the Convention. He was a representative Southerner—intelligent, elegant in manners, and faultless in taste. He was more careful to avoid the ellipsis in speaking than any person I have ever known. In conversation, in public discourses, and in presiding, he rarely omitted a word necessary for filling out his sentences. This

peculiarity made his addresses tedious, but gave them a stately and formal appearance.

Of the formation of the Southern Baptist Convention little need be said. A constitution, prepared by Dr. Johnson, was referred to a large committee, of which Dr. Fuller, of Baltimore, was chairman, reported with few amendments, and with slight discussion was unanimously adopted. All questions pertaining to the boards and the plans of the Convention were decided promptly and with great unanimity.

This Convention, on the whole, was the most remarkable body of Southern Baptists which I have seen. In numbers, intelligence, and earnest devotion to the cause of Christ, it would have been distinguished in any age and in any country. Many of its members were endowed with rare abilities. Johnson, for his sound wisdom, dignified appearance, and polished manners; Dr. Fuller, for his burning eloquence; Dr. Dagg, for his logical acumen and thorough theological knowledge; Dr. Mallory, for his fervent spirit and impassioned oratory; Dr. Taylor, for his gentleness, urbanity, and discretion; the elder Dr. Brantly, for his commanding appearance and noble bearing; and many others, for their various gifts and accomplishments, were worthy of admiration and esteem. Nor should the sound sense and practical wisdom of the Cranes, A. Thomas, the Hons. Thomas Stocks and A. Lumpkin, noble laymen, be overlooked in forming a judgment of the character of the body.

Thirty-four years have passed since this memorable meeting, and with them have departed most of the prominent actors in it. A few that took part in the proceedings are still lingering on the shore of time, and many who were then young and vigorous have become old and infirm. The Convention still lives. It has passed, like those who formed it, through many tribulations. By the death and return of its missionaries, by war at home and abroad, and by the great pecuniary distress of the South, its plans have been much thwarted and its means of usefulness greatly cramped. Its success in the home and foreign fields has been sufficient to call forth the gratitude and

inspire the hopes of its friends, but not great enough to encourage their boasting or their self-confidence. Their contributions, labors, and sacrifices in the cause of missions have not been commensurate with their number, resources, and obligations to Christ.

At the close of the Convention the Virginia and Maryland delegates had a pleasant return passage. One incident I may mention. The brethren in Charleston made a generous arrangement for the entertainment of the delegates at the Charleston Hotel on their homeward passage. Deacon James C. Crane declined accepting the kindness of the brethren. It was not, he said, hospitality. A prosperous merchant might well afford to pay his own fare; but to ministers with small salaries and short purses the arrangement was exceedingly convenient and pleasant, and called forth their expression of hearty thanks. Difference of opinion led, as usual, to discussion, in which Brother Witt was pitted against Deacon Crane. Witt reminded him that, in former times, when the delegates to the General Association came to Richmond by private conveyances, the brethren there made arrangements to keep the horses of the visitors at livery stables. It resembled the hospitality of the Charleston brethren. "That," said Crane. "was not hospitality." "Yes," said Witt, "it was horsebitality." The wit in the modification of the word turned the laugh against Crane; and a laugh in social debate is usually better than argument.

# XLVIII.

## A GREAT REVIVAL.

THE year 1842 was distinguished by a religious revival in the city of Richmond of unusual power extent and in terest. It commenced in the First Presbyterian church, under the ministry of Rev. William S. Plumer, D. D. About the first of March I visited Portsmouth, Va., where I met Rev. Israel Robords. He was a Northern evangelist, who had spent the preceding winter in the South, partly to recruit his health and partly to follow his vocation. Hearing him preach once or twice, I was pleased with his preaching, and invited him to accompany me to Richmond and aid me in a protracted meeting. He was in some respects among the most remarkable preachers whom I have heard. He was probably forty-five years old, tall, lean, of an unhealthy complexion, and rather ill-favored. He gained nothing from his personal appearance. His education was limited, but he had a sharp intellect, and was well informed, especially on religious subjects. He was not an orator, but his thoughts were quite original, and were expressed in a clear, nervous style, sometimes quite ornate, and even sublime. His discourses derived little advantage either from his voice or his gestures. He had most extraordinary power in dealing with the consciences of men. He 'seemed to have an almost perfect knowledge of the human heart, and to be able to lay bear its motives, its propensities, and its self-deceptions. People were afraid to hear him, lest he should expose their secret wickedness. He was terrible in his denunciations of all kinds of vice.

Elder Robords commenced his labors before a small congregation in the lecture-room of the First Baptist church. Scarcely any preacher was ever heard with such varying views and feelings. Some were pleased, others were disgusted, and many were amused, and not a few were in doubt as to the usefulness

of his eccentric sermons; but all wished to hear him again. His congregations rapidly increased until the spacious audienceroom of the church was crowded. His preaching gave great offense to many, but while he displeased some classes of his hearers he conciliated others. Against his caustic delineations of vice he set over many handsome compliments to the better portions of society. The effects of his ministry were various and surprising. Under his fierce denunciations of sin many writhed and went away to ridicule and blaspheme. In the art of reproving I have never known him excelled. I well remember one notable instance of his employing this art. He was preaching in the First church to a crowded audience, and was making pretty severe remarks against some vice or error, when three or four men in the gallery near the pulpit took offense and resolved to show their indignation. They rose from their seats, and walking slowly towards the point of egress from the gallery, stamped loudly as they went. All eyes were drawn towards them. The preacher stopped, and looking calmly at the retreating auditors, said with great composure and distinctness, "Being convicted by their own conscience, they went out one by one," the last word falling on the ears of the offended critics as they escaped from the room. The speaker resumed his discourse as if nothing had occurred. I have never seen a Southern audience in a religious meeting come so near to indulging in open applause as on that occasion. By his searching appeals not a few were awakened, melted into tears, and brought to sincere repentance. The members of the church were thoroughly aroused to a sense of their obligations, and stimulated to make earnest efforts for the salvation of sinners. It was really amusing to see how some of the brethren were at first disgusted, then offended, and afterwards conciliated and brought into harmony and co-operation with the evangelist.

Elder Robords continued his labors in the city, preaching twice a day, and attending an inquiry meeting in the afternoon, for about three weeks in the First and Second Baptist churches, and then left to fill an engagement in Baltimore. The meet-

ings were kept up with unabated or even increasing interest in the First, Second, and Third—then the only white Baptist churches in the city. The pastors, Magoon, Taylor, and myself, were aided by such ministers as we could secure from the country—among whom were Elder Jesse Witt, of Powhatan county, Elder Joseph Walker, of Hampton, and Elder Thomas W. Sydnor, of Nottoway.

After some weeks Elder Robords returned to the city and resumed his labors. He did not, however, regain his power. He preached most of the time in the Second and Third (now Grace-street) churches, and had large congregations, but it was questionable whether his second visit was of advantage to the cause. In a short while he left, carrying with him the confidence, love, and best wishes of many for his welfare, and the disapprobation, if not, indeed, the downright hatred, of not a few.

The meetings, with more or less frequency, were continued in the churches until the middle of the summer. Nearly 400 members were added to the white Baptist churches. Of this number about 170 were admitted into the First Baptist church, many of whom were heads of families, men of business and influence, who added greatly to its strength and efficiency. What was true of the First was doubtless true of the other Baptist churches. The First African church, under the ministry of Dr. Ryland, received large accessions, probably equalling in number those added to the white churches.

The revival was by no means limited to the Baptist churches. Commencing in the First Presbyterian church, it spread into all the evangelical churches of the city. I have no means of estimating the number of converts in the city, but it could hardly have been less than 1,500 in a population of possibly 30,000. Two or three things are worthy of special notice. An unusually large number of the converts were immersed. Dr. Waller, a Methodist pastor, baptized seventeen candidates at one time in the James river, just below Haxall's mill, and he administered the ordinance with due solemnity, and some awkwardness, arising from inexperience. A Unitarian-Univer-

salist church then in the city held what Mr. Robords said he had never heard of before since he "had breath and being"— a protracted meeting, and immersed a portion at least of their proselytes in the James river. On the whole, I have never seen in the city of Richmond a revival which, in its extent and results, equalled that of 1842.

Near the close of special religious services there came to my study a stranger, probably thirty years old, of the ordinary size, of ruddy complexion, of genteel appearance, and with a Scotch brogue. He had just crossed the Atlantic in a sailing vessel, and reached our port. He, after a brief introduction, gave this account of himself. He was a Presbyterian minister, educated and ordained in Scotland. He settled in the city of Lincoln, England, not far from the Scottish border, as pastor of an Independent church. Here he was succeeding pleasantly until an event occurred to disturb his equanimity. The Scotch Presbyterians baptize infants only when one or the other of their parents is a church member. The English Independents, on the other hand, baptize infants regardless of the moral character or relations of their parents. When infants of parents not members of a church were brought to him for baptism he hesitated to administer the right, but being informed that custom and church authority required it, he performed the service with painful doubts of its propriety. At length a child of parents notoriously deprayed was presented to him for baptism. His conscience revolted at the act, and he resolved not to perform it. Being assured that the refusal would involve him in ecclesiastical troubles, he resigned his charge and made arrangements to emigrate to America. He secured the most satisfactory testimonials of his piety and good standing as a minister, several of which were from persons whose fame was well known in this country, and finding a ship about to sail for Virginia, he took passage on it and safely reached our shore.

An important change took place in his views on his voyage. Having his Greek Testament and Lexicon, and other helps for learning the will of God, he determined to settle in his mind the question whether baptism should be limited to the infants

of church members or extended to all infants. Having left his native land, and passed beyond all ecclesiastical control, he was at liberty to study the subject with the simple desire to arrive at the knowledge of the truth. He soon became convinced that there was precisely as much scriptural authority for the baptism of the infants of the ungodly as for those of church members. In short, that there was no warrant from scriptural precept, example, or fair inference for the baptism of either class of infants. Rejecting infant baptism, he had no difficulty in accepting immersion as the true baptism. His Greek Testament and Lexicon furnished him ample testimony on that point. When he reached the waters of Virginia he was confirmed in distinctive Baptist principles. At the earliest opportunity he appeared before the First Baptist church as an applicant for baptism and membership. His experience and testimonials were entirely satisfactory, and he was baptized, received into the church, and at the first convenient opportunity he publicly stated, in a convincing and impressive manner, his reasons for changing his ecclesiastical relations. was soon licensed to preach, and entered on a bright career of usefulness, which unfortunately proved to be short.

This man was Rev. Duncan R. Campbell, D. D., the late lamented president of Georgetown College, Kentucky.

## XLIX.

# A DAY WITH THE UNITED STATES SENATE.

SOME time during the administration of Van Buren I spent a day in the United States Senate chamber. The Senate was at that time honored by many members distinguished for their talents and their influence—men of national, not to say of world-wide reputation. In the first rank were Webster, Calhoun, and Clay; in the second rank, and not far below the first, were Benton, Rives, and Preston; and in the third class were many names which would have done honor to any legislative body, among whom may be mentioned Wright of New York, and Clay of Alabama. It was a time of great political excitement. The Whigs and the Democrats were battling over the sub-treasury—an apple of discord which had been bequeathed to the country by the Jackson administration.

Perhaps no person ever visited the Senate chamber under circumstances more favorable for hearing a debate in which all the great senators gave an exhibition of their dialectic and oratorical powers than I did on that occasion. The subject under discussion was some resolution relating to the sub-treasury—a subject which then awakened intense and universal interest. There were no set speeches and no tedious arguments, but the senators indulged in an off-hand, free, and courteous debate. All the prominent senators participated in the discussion in speeches varying from ten to thirty minutes in length. Their remarks were fresh, sharp, and playful, but within the strict bounds of courtesy. My impressions of the different speakers, though imperfectly remembered, may interest some persons.

Henry Clay was past the vigor of life, tall, lean, and ill-favored. When I was quite young I was told that I bore a

strong resemblance to him. The opinion could not have been imaginary, for when I travelled in Kentucky, shortly after the late war, I was frequently reminded of my likeness of the illustrious senator—a likeness not in genius and oratory, but in person—a compliment which I accepted only with limitation, as I could not suppose that I was as ugly as the renowned civilian. He was among the first, if he was not the first, to speak on this occasion. His address was free, vivacious, earnest, and graceful. He displayed great flexibility of voice and versatility of manner. There had been some damaging defalcations in the sub-treasury department, and the orator, elevating his voice to a lofty pitch, cried: "Stop the leaks!" at the same time thumping with his hand as if he were driving in the spigot. The effect was electrical. The Whigs smiled and the Democrats winced.

John C. Calhoun, in height, form, and size, did not differ widely from his Kentucky rival. The South Carolinian was the more striking in appearance. His hair, then becoming silvery, stood erect, as if he had just seen a ghost. His speech was clear, terse, and pointed. I have never heard a speaker who so deeply impressed me with his intense earnestness. Mr. Clay spoke as if he believed all that he said, and desired the Senate to adopt his views, but would not be greatly troubled if they dissented from them. Mr. Calhoun spoke as if he thought the welfare of the country, if not the perpetuity of the government, depended on the adoption of his opinions in every jot and tittle. His manner must have been very impressive in the discussion of themes of great national moment, but on the comparatively trivial matter under consideration his earnestness seemed to be overstrained.

Daniel Webster differed widely in form from his illustrious compeers. He was low in stature, thickly set, strongly built, with a wide, high, massive forehead—strongly resembling the bust of the orator Cicero which I saw in the city of Rome. I heard Mr. Webster, not only on this occasion, but some years later, when he delivered his celebrated speech, under the October sun, from the southern portico of the Virginia capi-

tol, to an immense Whig convention. His speeches were distinguished for clearness of conception, purity of style, and force of argument, rather than for grace or impressiveness of delivery. He was a great statesman, but not an orator. His speeches were valuable, not so much for the manner of their delivery as for their well-considered and far-reaching thought.

Thomas H. Benton made a short speech. I afterwards heard him address a large audience in St. Louis on some matter pertaining to the commercial welfare of the city. He was a dull, heavy, uninteresting speaker—at least, so it seemed to me when I heard him. His remarks were sensible and well expressed, but derived no force from his voice, spirit, or gestures. That he was a laborious student, well informed in the history and politics of the country, and formidable in debate, I do not doubt, but his speeches appeared to better advantage in print than in the Senate chamber or from the rostrum.

William C. Rives was a man of ordinary size, good features, bearing the unmistakable marks of culture and refinement. On the occasion referred to he made the longest, and certainly one of the most sensible and statesmanlike, of all the speeches. While he could hardly be called an orator, his manner of speaking was good, and his thoughts were weighty and forcibly expressed. I afterwards heard him deliver a much more elaborate speech in the Confederate Congress. Whether through age he had lost the buoyancy of manhood, or failed from some other cause to catch the inspiration of his theme, I cannot say, but he did not seem to me to have the readiness, piquancy, and logic that distinguished his *extempore* senatorial address.

William C. Preston, of South Carolina, whom I never saw but on that occasion, was younger than most of the senators—a well-formed, lithe, and commanding person—a fine representative of a distinguished Virginia family. He delivered a speech which, for freedom of utterance, beauty of style, and gracefulness of delivery, was certainly not excelled by that of any senator on the occasion. He was a brilliant speaker.

Hearing him only once, and that on a subject which did not call forth his powers to their utmost extent, I could not form a confident opinion of his abilities, but with less depth of thought and less power in expression than some other senators possessed, he appeared to be one of the most facile and pleasing speakers to whom it has been my privilege to listen.

Several other senators, among whom I remember Wright of New York and Clay of Alabama, made speeches creditable to themselves and to the United States Senate. I do not recollect a single remark in the long and exciting discussion that was not in harmony with the dignity of the body and consistent

with the strictest rules of senatorial propriety.

Any comparison of the senators with one another, in view of their diversified qualifications, even by a writer who knew them intimately, would necessarily be imperfect; but by me, whose knowledge of them was so slight, it must be with little discrimination, and might be very unjust. I may, however, with propriety, state the results of a single day's observations. To me it seemed that Clay was the most lively, Calhoun the most earnest, Webster the most solid, Rives the most courtly, Preston the most fascinating, and Benton the least interesting of the senators.

"There were giants in the earth in those days." It is a singular fact that giants have always been supposed to belong to past times. The golden age preceded the historic. Few of the living generation have seen giants. Whether this failure is to be traced to the degeneracy of the races or the tendency to invest the dimly known beings of the past with imaginary greatness, it is the province of science and of history to decide. It may be that to future generations the United States senators of the present day will appear to be as profound in statesmanship, as logical in argument, as eloquent in speech, as courteous in debate, and as dignified in manners, as the senators of the Van Buren administration, but as yet the glamour of distance and of dimness has not produced this impression. Who among modern senators can be compared with Clay in resistless eloquence and masterly policy; to Calhoun in profound thought and con-

densed argument; or to Webster in wise statesmanship and patriotic devotion to the interests of the whole country? Let us hope that freedom from sectional strife and the love of country will, at no distant day, mature and bring to the front statesmen whose genius, learning, and renown will equal, if they do not eclipse, those of the most brilliant senators of the most favored period of American history.

#### USEFUL INVENTIONS.

THE first three quarters of the nineteenth century will be distinguished in all coming time as the Age of Inventions. The world little knows how deeply it is indebted for its comforts and conveniences to men of inventive genius. We use a thousand articles, the product of art and skill, without ever inquiring whence they came or to whose patient studies and laborious efforts we are under obligations for their origination and excellence. I am writing with a golden pen, dipped in ink contained in a glass inkstand supported by a handsomely moulded bronze base. How many centuries of thought and toil were needed to bring these common conveniences to their present perfection! The furniture, implements, adornments, and innumerable means of enjoyment now possessed by civilized nations are the result of the combined studies and activities of mankind in all past ages. Every generation has bequeathed to the succeeding one the fruits of its inventive toils. present century commenced its operations on an elevated plane and with marked advantages, but it must be conceded, after every reasonable deduction, that it has excelled all past centuries in the number, variety, and usefulness of its inventions. I will briefly mention a few of them, with their inestimable advantages.

My memory antedates the invention of the *Steamboat*. Living in an obscure rural neighborhood, I knew nothing of this wonderful production of genius until some years after it had attracted the attention of the world. I recollect reading, at an early period of my life, a graphic account of the launching of the first steamer at the city of New York. All except a few skilled mechanics and learned scientists believed that Fulton was visionary, and that his boat would be a ludicrous failure. On the day appointed for launching the strange craft thousands

gathered on the shore of the stream to witness its defeat. All sorts of remarks in derision of the wild scheme were indulged in by the amused spectators. The boat was launched, pushed out into the middle of the river, its head turned against the current, the steam applied, and it moved off in fine style. The shout that rose from the astonished crowd rent the very heavens. From that hour nobody doubted the success of steam navigation.

On my first visit to Richmond, in 1823, nothing more excited my curiosity and won my admiration than a steamboat. It was a small craft then plying between this city and Norfolk. Compared with the noble ocean steamers of the present time it would be quite contemptible, but to me, reared among the mountains and who had seen nothing larger than a boat propelled by poling or paddling, it seemed a wonderful production of art.

Steamers rapidly multiplied, and soon ran on all the rivers and bays of the country. The most sanguine advocates of steam power had no expectation that it could ever be applied to ocean navigation except along the coasts. Steam, however, having been harnessed for the service of man, it was impossible to predict where its exploits would end. In the year 1838 I attended a meeting of the Baptist Triennial Convention in New York. The city was thrown into the most intense excitement by the unexpected arrival of the Great Western, the first steamer that had crossed the Atlantic. Its success was complete. The citizens were invited to visit and inspect this rare specimen of naval architecture. I was domiciliated with an honored member of the city council, and went with him, under favorable circumstances, to examine this beautiful steamer. We have seen larger, and perhaps stronger and more scientifically built, steamers, but we have never seen one more tastefully finished or more comfortably arranged than the Great Western. Its voyage was an epoch in navigation. In a little while steamers were navigating every ocean, sea, bay, and considerable stream on the globe. It is impossible to estimate the influence of steam navigation on the industries, commerce, civilization, and history of the world.

The Daguerreian art came into existence long after I had reached maturity. For it we are indebted to Daguerre, a Frenchman. The first specimen of it that I saw was a picture of the southern end of the old market-house on Main street, in this city, taken by a French druggist whose store was near at hand. The art has undergone various changes and improvements. The daguerreotype was succeeded by the ambrotype, a picture on glass, and this has been supplanted by the photograph—the present style of taking pictures. It is certainly a wonderful art. At a small cost and with little trouble it enables us to preserve the likenesses of our friends with a degree of accuracy which could not have been secured in former times by royal wealth. Moreover, it enables even the poor to possess accurate pictures of the most remarkable scenes in nature and the most wonderful productions of art. One may view by its help the Bay of Naples or the Arch of Titus without the cost and trouble of visiting it. In the steamer, the expansive power of heat is made subservient to navigation; in the daguerreian art, the sun himself is made to do the work for centuries performed by painters.

Of the invention of Lucifer Matches I can give no account. They derive their name, not from their first maker, but from the being supposed to rule the fiery region. They are small things, and very abundant and cheap, but persons who have been always accustomed to their use can form but little conception of their value. I had reached maturity before they were invented, and know by experience the inconvenience of living without them. In the country fire was usually preserved by being carefully covered up at night in ashes. If it was extinguished it had to be obtained by the use of flint, steel, and spunk, or a tinder horn. In the absence of these conveniences it was sometimes necessary to send a mile or more, in the most inclement weather, to obtain a live coal with which to kindle the morning fires. Lucifer matches have abolished the use of all the means formerly employed for obtaining fire, but, like other good things, they have been perverted to evil purposes. They are used by incendiaries for the accomplishment of their nefarious purposes. But, with all the mischief to which they are perverted, how could we dispense with them?

Railroads, with their Steam Engines, are among the wonders of the age. I remember well my first conception of a railroad, obtained from a magazine, illustrated by plates, some time about the year 1829. At that time there was no railroad on this continent. The first in this country of whose existence I have any recollection was the Baltimore and Ohio, extending to Ellicott's mills, where its progress was for some while arrested. The first I saw, as stated in another article, was that from Frenchtown, on the Chesapeake bay, to New Castle, on the Delaware river. At an early period a railroad was constructed from the coal pits in Chesterfield county to this city. The road from Petersburg to Weldon was among the first projected and commenced in the land. All these roads, excepting, possibly, the Petersburg and Weldon, were operated by horse or mule power. The Chesterfield road continued to be worked by mules until it was superseded by the Richmond and Danville road. The introduction of the locomotive, about the year 1830, marked an era in railroad operations. The first that I saw was on the Frenchtown and New Castle road. One accustomed to steam engines from childhood can form no conception of the impression made by it on my mind. It seemed to be a huge iron monster, endowed with life and intelligence, and devoting its superhuman powers to the convenience of man. It is not surprising that a beholder who had never heard of the engine should have been alarmed at its appearance, and described it as "the devil in harness." The advantages of railroads soon brought them into general use among a people so practical and enterprising as were the Americans. Now every plain is traversed, every mountain is tunnelled, and every river is bridged in their interest. Persons accustomed to railroad locomotion cannot well imagine the tediousness of travelling by the old methods. Yet, strange to say, we hear almost as much complaint of slow travelling in railroad cars, when passengers are rolled at the rate of five hundred miles a day, without fatigue or care, as when they rode in coaches sixty miles a day, and

frequently found it necessary to trudge through the mud and climb the hills to lighten the draft of the exhausted teams.

I must refer to one more invention. The Telegraph is more wonderful, and little less useful, than the railroad. I remember hearing Elder John Kerr say, in one of his imaginative, oratorical flights, that he would not be surprised if the time should come when intelligence would be communicated by lightning. Whether he had any definite conception of its probability, or merely indulged in fancy, I know not; to his hearers the prediction seemed to be a wild dream. He did not, I think, live to see its fulfillment, but the event quickly followed his death. Had it been suggested to the wisest of the ancient philosophers that the time would come when even peasants would eat their breakfasts while reading the news of the past day from all parts of the world, and from continents and islands of which the ancients had never dreamed, the prophecy would have seemed to them as the lawless fancy of a disordered brain; and yet we have lived to see this most improbable conjecture realized in every quarter of the globe.

Of the more recent inventions—the sewing, reaping, and mowing machines, the phonographs, telephones, and electric lights, and of the many labor-saving arrangements—I need not speak. They are revolutionizing the world, but whether their social and moral influence will be for good or for evil time must decide.

#### A TRIP TO THE WEST.

A T the close of the Triennial Convention in Philadelphia, in 1844, my friend, Rev. Daniel Witt, and myself set off on a Western excursion—he with the purpose of deciding whether he would remove to the West, and I to see my relatives who had settled in Missouri. I kept a journal of our tour, which was published in the *Religious Herald* shortly after my return; and I may remark, in passing, that this is the first record of the kind to which I have referred for reviving my recollections. It was in many respects a remarkable journey, of which I will give a brief account.

Our trip was from Philadelphia to Chambersburg by railway, and from thence by coach across the Alleghany mountain to Pittsburg. The coach was crowded within and without, the weather was rainy, the roads were muddy, our progress was slow, and our condition was far from being enviable. On this part of the journey occurred the extraordinary display of self-ishness mentioned some time since in the *Herald* by Dr. J. M. Pendleton, one of our fellow-passengers.

Rev. Mr. —— was among the travellers. He was a member of the Convention from the Buckeye State, had taken quite an active part in its proceedings, and was a man of no mean gifts. His name was the eleventh on the list of passengers, and of course he was not entitled to an inside seat. When the coach was brought out at Chambersburg he was first to enter it, and, without ceremony or apology, took a choice hind seat. During the journey many changes of seats were made for the accommodation of the wet and weary passengers, but the Buckeye traveller firmly maintained his position. After journeying all night and until late in the afternoon of the next day, through frequent and heavy showers, the coach broke down beneath its heavy human freight. The driver was compelled to leave the

coach and horses and go forward to a tavern to obtain help. He was followed by the deck passengers, anxious to find a shelter from the threatening rain. Among the travellers there was a Bostonian, of genial and most unselfish spirit. He had endeavored throughout the trip to make himself agreeable and diminish the discomforts of the travel. He was left by the driver in charge of his team. The rain beginning to fall more heavily, the generous Yankee came to the door of the coach and inquired whether any of the passengers could lend him an umbrella. The umbrellas of the inside tourists, with a single exception, had been lent to their outside friends and carried by them to the tavern. All answered, except the Buckeye, that their umbrellas were in use. It was soon perceived that he had one carefully covered and laid at his side; and he was requested to lend it to the exposed Bostonian. He replied: "It is new—it has never been used—it has a cover on it." "Take my parasol," said a kind lady. "No," replied the generous Yankee, "I won't remain; the gentleman may take care of the horses himself." "He is right!" exclaimed the lady; and all the passengers assented to the remark. "I guess," said the Buckeye with imperturbable composure, "he is offended because I would not lend him my umbrella."

From Pittsburg we travelled by steamer down the Ohio and up the Mississippi river to St. Louis, occupying, including stoppages and changes, quite a week. The trip to me was exceedingly interesting. I was a green traveller, and to me everything was new. The shores, the towns, the passengers, the customs, and the ever-shifting scenes furnished opportunities for observations and yielded increasing delight.

Brother Witt and myself spent a month in the State of Missouri, visiting our friends, traversing its broad and beautiful prairies, navigating its noble rivers, trying our unpracticed hands at unsuccessful deer-hunting, and preaching occasionally, to deeply interested audiences, the same gospel which in our youth we had proclaimed with so much pleasure in the rural districts of Virginia. We seemed to live over again our early years. It was to us a season of great enjoyment, and, I

trust, of no little profit. During all the month the rains, with slight intermissions, had been falling, and sometimes heavily. The rivers were swelled above their banks, the prairies were covered with water, and the whole country was converted into mud.

On the 19th of June we left St. Louis on our return home. We took passage in a steamer to ascend the Illinois river. We doubt whether in all the history of Western steamboat navigation such a trip has been recorded. Since the settlement of the country by Europeans no such rise in the western streams has been known. A pillar on the levee in St. Louis, erected to perpetuate the memory of the flood, shows that the Mississippi was three or four feet higher than it has been at any other time within the period of authentic information. The levee. quite wide and elevated, was covered with water, and the houses on Water street were deluged by it. The river overspread the bottom on the Illinois side to the bluff, a distance of eight or ten miles. On the topmost wave of this unparalleled flood we commenced our homeward voyage. Whoever makes such a trip will remember it. In our progress the steamer passed along stage roads, over prairies and cultivated farms, and through the streets of towns, finding it necessary to change its course continually to avoid the descending drift-wood, with which the current in many places was literally covered. Houses might be seen submerged in every degree, from the door-sill to the roof. Many signs were visible of the escape of families from the devouring flood through the roofs of their houses, and by boats kept in readiness for use in the last extremity. fresh in the Illinois was proportionately greater than in any other river. Its banks are so high that passengers on the upper decks of steamers cannot at low water see the bottoms on either side. At this time the banks were overflowed to the depth of ten feet, and the voyagers could gaze on a boundless waste of water. At Naples, a small town on the river, the stream was forty feet perpendicular above low-water mark.

After two days' run amid the wonders of the rushing, desolating flood we landed at Ottawa, and took a coach for Chicago, then a town of seven thousand inhabitants. From this place we came in a steamer by Mickinaw and Detroit to Buffalo, and thence by rail to the Falls of Niagara, our point of destination.

Of all the persons who have ever seen this thundering cataract, we, who had just travelled on the Father of Waters in his most turbid and turbulent mood, saw it at the greatest disadvantage. Things are great or small by comparison. Niagara is a great river, and the cataract is one of the wonders of the world. I took much pains to get a favorable view of it. I was conducted to a commanding position, and opened my eyes suddenly on the scene that I might be strongly impressed by its grandeur. I was disappointed. It was impossible for me to conceive that the Falls were great. I thought of the Mississippi as I had just seen it, ten miles wide, covered with drift-wood, and flowing at the rate of five or six miles an hour. My imagination could supply all the rest. I fancied that I could see the Mississippi, with its enormous masses of driftwood, dashing over a precipice deep in proportion to the width of the stream, and roaring above seven thunders in the fearful chasm below. That was a cataract worth looking at. The Falls before me, in spite of myself, seemed to be little more than the mimic waterfalls that I sported with in my childhood. I did not make the attempt to jump across the Falls, but I felt as if I could do it.

After surveying the Falls from different points, and forming a just estimate of its proportions, I was deeply impressed with its magnitude and grandeur. It does not equal in extent and sublimity the falls of the Mississippi river created by my excited imagination, but it is certainly among the most interesting of the earthly wonders on which I have been permitted to gaze. It is worthy to be classed with the stupendous Rock Bridge of this State; the Saguenay river, in Canada, with its wild and diversified scenery; Mont Blanc, in Switzerland, arrayed in the golden hues of an evening sunset. But neither pen nor pencil can give the reader any adequate conception of it.

The seeming insignificance of the cataract was the only delu-

sion into which I fell on this visit. Elder Witt and myself employed a hackman to carry us to Lundy's Lane, a memorable battle-field of the war of 1812. He was very civil and kind, and to save us from expense he volunteered to act as our cicerone. He had heard the popular guide so often describe the scene that it was quite familiar to him. Very fluently he pointed out where the British troops were posted, where Scott with his valiant forces advanced, and how the battle raged with varying success until finally victory perched on the American banner. We were profoundly interested in the scene, and in imagination fought over the battle of Lundy's Lane.

On returning home I wrote out and published an account of my visit to Lundy's Lane, with the impressions of the battle which I had received from our courteous guide. Some years afterwards I was in conversation with a gentleman who had visited Lundy's Lane. He referred to Brock's monument. I told him there was no monument on the field when I was there. He said there must have been—that it stood at the head of the village. I replied that I saw no village at the place. "Why," said he, "you have never been to Lundy's Lane." He was right. The artful but dishonest hackman carried us a mile or so from the Falls, and finding that he could practice on our credulity, made us believe that we were at Lundy's Lane.

We were neither the first nor the last travellers deceived by guides. Not long since we read an account in a highly respectable journal of Mount Vesuvius by a tourist who had either never seen it or had been grievously cheated by his cicerone. The reports of travellers in unexplored regions are in many cases no more worthy of credit than dreams. Their uncertainty and their exaggerations give force and interest to the admirable burlesque stories of Baron Munchausen.

#### A TRIP TO FLORIDA.

NEAR the close the year 1844 the state of my wife's health rendered it necessary that I should take her to a southern climate. By medical advice, Florida was selected as the most suitable resort. We travelled by rail to Wilmington N. C., and by steamer to Charleston, S. C., where we spent a Sabbath. At this latter place an incident occurred which deserves to be recorded. We put up at the Charleston Hotel. Mrs. Jeter and myself were seated in the parlor. She was pale, delicate, far from home, among strangers, and depressed in spirits. In the parlor were many ladies and gentlemen, healthful and gay, engaged in lively conversation. Mrs. Jeter and myself sat alone, and were silent. As one of the ladies was about to leave the room she walked up to Mrs. Jeter, handed her a large and beautiful bouquet, and, without uttering a word, retired before we had an opportunity of thanking her. A courtesy so considerate, kind, and graceful brought tears to our eyes. We knew not her name, and she probably did not know ours; but I have never since thought of the event without the liveliest admiration of the delicate attention of the Charleston lady. How much might be done, with little cost or trouble, to cheer the sorrowing and to encourage the desponding by thoughtful and delicate attentions.

From Charleston we went by steamer to Savannah. Of all the cities I have seen in the New World or in the Old, this was the most profusely and the most beautifully shaded. From this point we took a steamer to Palatka, on the St. Johns river, Florida. Its route was along the bays and creeks on the eastern coast of Georgia. The boat was pretty well crowded with invalids seeking a southern climate. It presented a sad spectacle. The invalids were in various stages of that most fearful of human diseases—consumption. In the saloon and on

deck, fore and aft, coughing was incessant. It was impossible to avoid its sound. The conversation all turned on the terrible malady. Each sufferer had his tale of pains, and weakness, and loss of appetite, and hemorrhages, and various remedies tried in vain, of which he was never wearied of telling. Go where I would, the deep, hollow cough was sounding in my ears; address whom I would, consumption, with its various ills, real and imaginary, was the theme of conversation. Most of the emaciated invalids were hopeful of relief from the balmy air of the South.

I am not peculiarly subject to the power of my imagination, but after spending the afternoon and early hours of the night in listening to descriptions of the symptoms of consumption, and marking its unmistakable and frightful ravages on beautiful women and stalwart men, I began seriously to question whether I was not myself a victim of the deadly disease. I felt and remembered various symptoms bearing a strong resemblance to those which had been so minutely depicted by my fellow-passengers. My spirits were depressed by the melancholy scenes around me. I retired to rest with a painful apprehension that I might have, in its incipiency, the very disease the sad marks of which I saw all around me. A good night's sleep and the refreshing breezes of the morning dissipated my fears.

The St. Johns is a broad stream, coming from the interior of Florida, and met by a strong tide from the Atlantic. Its banks are low, and its bottoms were heavily wooded, and covered with a luxuriant and tangled undergrowth. I was struck with one fact. The palmetto is the monarch of the forests. It is a straight tree, with thick, tough bark, and long leaves at the top, umbrella-shaped. All the trees of the forest—whether in honor of their monarch I cannot say—seemed inclined to assume the palmetto shape. The pine, which I had been accustomed from my boyhood to see as a spreading, shady tree, sent up a tall, straight body, without branches, and with a heavy tuft of long leaves issuing from its summit.

At 9 o'clock at night we reached Palatka, the point at which we were to take the stage for St. Augustine. It was a mem-

orable day in Palatka. Half the town had been burned by an accidental fire—a serious matter to its inhabitants, though there were but two houses in the place. If the better one was spared, the one burned had nothing to boast of on the score of architectural style. The covering on the bed in the hotel was light, and I have no recollection of having suffered more from cold on any night than on the first which I spent in Florida.

The next day, after a few hours' run in a light wagon, we reached St. Augustine. It was built by the Spaniards, and is the oldest town on the continent. It contained probably 1,000 inhabitants, with narrow streets, and houses singularly shaped, whose verandas almost touched one another across the darkened streets below. They were of Spanish architecture, and bore, as I have since learned, a striking resemblance to the small towns of Southern Europe. A large portion of the native population was Minorcans. They had quite a romantic history. In the early settlement of the colony certain scheming adventurers induced a large number of peasants from the island of Minorca to emigrate to Florida by fair promises of fertile lands and a genial climate. The Spaniards, who were largely engaged in the slave trade, made arrangements for reducing these confiding immigrants to slavery. They were landed and settled some distance south of St. Augustine, and were kept for years in strict bondage. At length they obtained information of the settlement at St. Augustine, made their escape from slavery, and arrived in a body at the town. Here their descendants were living—a plain and thriftless people, retaining in a remarkable degree the manners and customs of their ancestors—when I was at the place.

It was not my purpose to spend the winter in St. Augustine. Mrs. Jeter had relatives and friends residing there, to whose care I committed her, and after a few weeks set off on my return home. From St. Augustine I sailed in a regular packet to Charleston. It was the longest sea voyage which I had then made. The weather was mild, the winds were light, the voyage was pleasant, nothing of particular interest occurred, and I reached Charleston safely.

My voyage from Charleston to Wilmington was more eventful. When I reached the wharf to embark a heavy wind was blowing from the southeast, and dark clouds vailed the skies. Had I been back at the hotel I would have waited for more propitious weather, but as I had made all my arrangements for embarking I was unwilling to change my purpose. It was ominous that there was only one passenger beside myself. Remarks were frequently made by the persons on the shore of the probable roughness of the passage. We had barely passed beyond the bar when the steamer was frightfully tossed by the wind and the billows. Unable to stand on my feet, and threatened with nausea, I retired to the saloon and prostrated myself on a settee. By keeping my head level with my body I could escape sea-sickness—at least such a measure of it as would produce vomiting. Soon it was dark, the lights were extinguished or lowered, everything on deck was put in order for a storm, and all the officers and hands of the boat were at their posts. I was sure from the creaking, thumping, and tossing of the boat that the weather must be heavy; but not a soul could I see from whom I could gain any information about the storm or our danger. My fellow-traveller, who seemed to be a landlubber, soon fell asleep, and his snoring mingled with the roaring of the billows. I had long wished to see a storm at sea, but I had no desire to be introduced to it under such circumstances as then surrounded me. I resolved, however, that I would see, if possible, something of its terrible grandeur. I arose from the settee, and staggering along, catching at the furniture as I went, opened the door of the saloon, and stepped into water ankle deep on the deck. I got back as best I could and resigned myself to my fate and to solemn meditations and The words of Kirk White came impressively to my prayer. mind:

"Once on the raging sea I rode;
The storm was loud, the night was dark,
The ocean yawned, and rudely blowed
The wind that tossed my foundering bark."

It was one of the most painful nights that I have ever passed.

I did not sleep, but, like the voyagers driven with Paul on the sea of Adria, "wished for the day."

About dawn we reached the mouth of the Cape Fear river. My fellow-voyager, having occasion to go on deck, soon returned with a smiling face, saying: "We have had a very pleasant run." I knew if we had I had been insane. In a short while the captain, answering an inquirer on the shore, said, in language the coarseness of which the reader may excuse on account of its expressiveness: "We have had a hell of a night." He afterwards stated that it was one of the worst passages that he had ever made on that perilous coast.

Having lost a night's sleep, and being much prostrated, I resolved to rest a day in Wilmington. I repaired to a hotel, and on looking in a mirror I was frightened at the appearance of my face. It was emaciated and quite changed in its proportions. It seemed impossible that a night of terror should have caused so great an alteration, but the proof of it was clear to my vision. An accidental turning of the glass revealed the fact that its reflections were not true. By a change of position, it presented my face in an aspect as ludicrous as at first it seemed meagre and sad. I was quite relieved by the discovery, and soon felt that I was myself again.

After a few weeks' absence I reached my home, with great cause of thankfulness that my life had been preserved, and that my journey had been, in many respects, pleasant as well as safe.

#### LIII.

## KNAPP'S VISIT TO RICHMOND.

ELDER Jacob Knapp was the most eminent American evangelist of his day, certainly among Baptists. He had gained a great reputation at the South by the results of meetings which he held in Baltimore some time about 1840. The Baptists of that city were few and feeble, their progress having been greatly hindered by Antinomian views prevalent in some of the churches. The visit of Elder Knapp to the city was most opportune. Large crowds attended on his ministry, deep and wide-spread impressions were caused by it, and large accessions were made to the Baptist churches. It was a new era for the Baptists of Baltimore. An addition of five hundred members—many of them wealthy and respectable—was made to their ranks.

A few years afterwards Knapp was invited to labor with the Baptist churches in Washington, District of Columbia. His success here was good, but not comparable in extent to that of his Baltimore meetings. His contiguity to Richmond, at a time when our churches needed reviving, led to the inquiry whether it would be wise to request him to hold meetings here. There were serious objections to the measure. Chief among these was the fact that he was an outspoken and, as was supposed, not very prudent abolitionist. At that time there was no little excitement in the country on the subject of slavery, and the public mind in Richmond was in no frame to listen even to a candid discussion of it, and was ready to break out into violence upon any indiscreet interference with it. Most of the Baptists desired that he should come if they could be assured that he would act cautiously on the vexing subject of slavery, but many feared that he might do more harm by indiscretion than he would do good by his preaching.

Under these circumstances, Deacon A. Thomas, who was

anxious that Knapp should visit Richmond, and myself were requested to go to Washington city and have an interview with him. We called on him and assured him that the brethren desired him to visit Richmond, but told him plainly that any efforts on his part to discuss the subject of slavery, while it might be endured, would certainly preclude the possibility of his usefulness. He was exceedingly chary in his conversation. He positively declined to give any assurance that he would not preach on the subject of slavery, and we as positively told him that we did not wish his services if he would not refrain from its discussion. With this understanding of the case, without any pledge on his part, he accepted the invitation to hold meetings in Richmond.

In a short time Elder Knapp, accompanied by Mrs. Knapp, made his appearance in this city. He was then probably fifty years old, short of stature, thick, with strong Dutch features. He commenced his labors under some respects favorable, and under other respects unfavorable. The Baptists were united in his support and intensely anxious for his success. The antiabolition and skeptical spirit were combined against him and ready to avail themselves of any indiscreet remark which he might utter or any imprudent step which he might make to hinder his usefulness and cast reproach on the meetings.

Knapp began his preaching in the First Baptist church. His success in Baltimore insured him large congregations from the beginning. The services proceeded several days in the most satisfactory and encouraging manner. At length, however, some remark on the subject of slavery, as it seemed to us needlessly thrown into the discourse, served to fill the brethren with the apprehension of his imprudence and give his enemies an excuse for reproaching him and his work. We cautioned him of the injurious influence on his ministry of these incidental allusions to slavery. They could enlighten and profit nobody, but they were admirably suited to dispirit his friends and to enrage his enemies. He became more cautious. For some days his preaching was plain, earnest, and well adapted to do good, and the religious feeling of the con-

gregation was evidently increasing. It was not long, however, before other remarks were made on the subject of slavery, innocent in themselves, and which Elder Taylor or myself might have made without offense, that checked the rising interest in religion and set all to watching his words in an anxious or in a captious spirit.

Perceiving his strong desire to make side remarks on the subject of slavery, and that they must prevent his usefulness, we proposed to him to continue his preaching without these impertinent allusions so well suited to divert attention from the main object of the services—the conversion of sinners—and that at the close of his labors we would call together all the Baptists of the city and give him an opportunity to deliver his views of slavery without restraint. To this proposal he showed no readiness to accede. We should have been right well pleased to encounter him in debate on the subject under circumstances which did not threaten to prevent the usefulness of our meetings.

After a week or two the meeting was removed to the Second Baptist church. The preaching of Elder Knapp was continued with very little change in its character. He would make excellent impressions by his very solemn and searching appeals, and then efface them by injudicious remarks. We were tossed from hope to fear, and from fear to hope, we know not how many days. At length these ill-timed remarks and insinuations, that under other circumstances might have been endured, became unbearable. At the close of a service which had been attended by a large congregation, upon brief consultation among the brethren he was informed that his services were no longer desired. To prevent tumult or excitement arrangements were made for his return to Washington by the early train of the next day. We do not remember what compensation was allowed the Elder for his labors, but we are quite sure, from our knowledge of the generous deacons of the day, that he did not depart without his hire.

Having passed over the battle, we may now at leisure survey the field of conflict. Elder Knapp was no ordinary man. He had clear conceptions, strong common sense, a fair knowledge of theology, a pretty thorough acquaintance with human nature—Yankee, not Southern, human nature, if I may use the remark without discourtesy—and a remarkably pointed manner of expressing his thoughts. He was neither an orator nor a logician, but was gifted in the art of illustration. His preaching had more to do with the conscience than the emotions. He had a great opportunity of usefulness in Richmond, had he known how to employ it. As it was, the meeting was attended with considerable success. Quite a number of additions were made to the churches, and some of them were valuable. On the whole, I considered him a pious man and an able evangelist.

Elder Knapp, however, was not perfect, and in this respect did not differ from his race. He had more obstinacy than prudence. In his attacks on slavery he did not go far enough to entitle him to praise for his heroism, and he went quite too far to be commended for his discretion. His judgment was greatly influenced by his feelings. I may state a fact in confirmation of this remark. During the time that he was preaching at the First church he held a service in the African church. He was greatly delighted with his success. The congregation was large, and the religious feeling was deep and general. He declared that he had not seen so much of the presence of God since he had been in the city, and expressed the opinion that his labors would have been far more useful among the colored people than they had been among the whites. A few days afterwards, in discussing the subject of slavery with him, I told him that an incidental benefit of it was that a great number of the race had been evangelized. He instantly affirmed that the negroes were so ignorant and so debased by slavery that they could not be benefited by the gospel. I called his attention to his report of the result of his late service in the African church. To me it seemed that he resorted to mere quibbling to conceal a contradiction which he must have discerned.

I must refer in self-vindication to another point. In the Life of Elder Knapp there are some statements which need to be corrected, or, at least, explained. I have not the book at hand, and must rely on my memory in reporting them.

It is stated that Elder Knapp "boarded" with me during his stay in Richmond. To board is to receive food and lodging for compensation. Brother Knapp and his wife shared in the hospitality of myself and family, and had the best fare that we could give them. Possibly by the word "boarded" he meant simply entertained. He censured me on account of the manner in which a servant of mine was clothed. These are the facts. Old Uncle Davy was a slave almost entirely past service, who came into my possession by marriage, and for whose maintenance I was bound by the laws of the State as well as the dictates of humanity. Whether he or I was master it would have been difficult to decide. To me was conceded the right to control, but as a matter of fact Uncle Davy would have his own way. He had a singular penchant for preserving his clothes. He had more, if not of so fine a texture, I dare say, than either myself or Elder Knapp, but he wore his good clothes only on Sundays. He had an overcoat which had probably been in use twenty-five years. It had been patched and darned, and mended again and again, until it had all the colors of the rainbow, and probably contained nothing of the stuff of which it was originally made. I repeatedly expostulated with him against wearing the relic, but he insisted that it was comfortable and that its appearance was of no importance. I could not have prevented him from wearing that and other apparel well suited to it without the exercise of an authority which Elder Knapp would have considered as a bitter fruit of slavery, and to the use of which I had an instinctive repugnance. That the brother gave the impressions made on his mind by the beggarly garments of my old servant or beneficiary, I do not question; but whether, as a participant of my hospitality, it was kind in him to report these impressions without some effort to learn whether they were founded in truth or misconception, the reader must judge for himself.

## LIV.

### CAMP-MEETING SCENES.

THE success of the Baptist camp-meetings in the Northern Neck led to the holding of similar meetings in other parts of the State. Rev. W. F. Broaddus, afterwards dubbed D. D., attended several of the meetings in the Neck. Being much pleased with their results he resolved to introduce them into his field of labor. Several were held under his management in the counties of Fauquier and Culpeper. They were largely attended, very orderly, and eminently profitable. Some time about the year 1840 Dr. Broaddus removed to Kentucky, and the propriety of holding a camp-meeting without his judicious superintendence was very doubtful; but a permanent and comfortable encampment having been prepared in Culpeper county, and used with great advantage, it was deemed by the brethren in the vicinity unwise to abandon it. A meeting was appointed to be held at the regular time, in the summer after the removal of Broaddus. The usual ministers, excepting their trusted leader, were in attendance. The number of persons encamped on the ground, and the congregation assembling from day to day, were quite as great as on previous occasions.

The meeting was in some respects the most remarkable which in the course of an extended ministry I have seen. There was nothing uncommon in the preaching. It was plain, evangelical, faithful, and earnest, but not accompanied by such impassioned appeals as were made by Elder John Kerr at the first camp-meeting held in the vicinity. The congregations were unusually attentive, serious, and respectful. The place bore a funereal aspect.

The singular thing in the meeting was that there were no cases of conversion, no inquirers, and no demonstration of religious feeling till near the close of the services. Scarcely any persons presented themselves for prayer or to receive special

instruction. The absence of Dr. Broaddus was felt and lamented, and the impression generally prevailed that his presence was essential to the success of the meeting. There was, however, no relaxation of earnestness and labor on the part of the ministers and brethren, or of profound and solemn attention on the part of the audience. For a whole week the prayers and exertions of Christians for the salvation of sinners were unintermitted.

The last morning arrived clear, calm, and pleasant. There was something peculiarly soothing and impressive in the dense shade and unbroken stillness of the surrounding forest. Arrangements had been made for a parting service. Inquirers and persons who had found peace in believing during the meeting were requested to occupy reserved seats in front of the stand. To our amazement and delight, long rows of seats, one after another, were filled with inquirers and converts, numbering from one hundred and fifty to two hundred persons. the close of the public services the ministers passed among the occupants of the reserved seats and were astonished to find that almost all of them were cherishing hope in Christ, which they had obtained since the opening of the services in the camp. There was no outburst of feeling, but great tenderness and joy among the converts, and a wonderful mingling of surprise and delight among their pious friends. It was almost impossible to close the meeting. Ten o'clock was the hour set for the adjournment, but the hour of twelve found most of the people lingering in a place where they felt it good to be. Some of the inquirers refused to leave the ground, and prayer was made to God unceasingly for them until late in the afternoon, when, with trusting, joyful hearts and radiant countenances, they were ready to depart.

That morning was nearest to the Pentecostal season of any time that has come within my experience. The revival differed so widely in its manifestations from such as I had known that I made special efforts to learn what were its abiding fruits. They were as excellent in quality as they were uncommon in the manner of their production. Most of the converts were bap-

tized by the pastors in the vicinity of the camp. They were largely composed of the heads of families and persons of intelligence, respectability, and influence in the community. I learned from various sources that they proved to be living, faithful, and valuable accessions to the churches.

There were two lessons plainly taught by this extraordinary meeting. One was that we should not place in our evangelical labors an undue reliance on human agency. Dr. Broaddus was endowed with most versatile and excellent gifts, and was peculiarly fitted to conduct the services of a camp-meeting; but the Lord showed us that his talents and influence were not essential to its success. The other was, that ministers should not be discouraged by adverse appearances when they are conducting religious services. There was much in the meeting referred to above to try the faith of the pious laborers. They preached the gospel to attentive hearers—so far as there was encouragement—but they seemed insensible, inaccessible, and remote from righteousness. In the very hour before the pervasive and subduing power of the gospel became manifest the most sanguine of the brethren would have pronounced the meeting a comparative failure, and yet it was really one of the most, if it was not the most, successful of all the meetings that I have ever attended. "In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand; for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they shall both be alike good."

I may mention another remarkable scene, which occurred a few years before the one described above. The Baptists of Caroline county held a camp-meeting, which was attended by Dr. W. F. Broaddus, myself, and other ministers. Nothing unusual occurred during its progress. The congregations were large and orderly, the preaching was earnest, and there was much religious feeling, with not much visible fruit from the services. The attention and seriousness of the audience inspired the hope that the word preached was making a good impression. On the last evening of the meeting it was proposed that persons anxious on the subject of their salvation should occupy

seats in front of the pulpit before the commencement of the services. Broaddus and myself retired to the forest for prayer. On our return, to our great surprise and joy, we found the designated seats crowded with inquirers, most of them young men. It was my lot to preach. As I now remember, my text was Rev. xxii. 17: "The Spirit and the bride say, come," etc. Of the sermon I need only remark that it was delivered with freedom and earnestness. At its close a large gentleman, in the vigor of life, the husband of a pious sister, for whose salvation many prayers had been offered and many efforts put forth, came forward, uninvited, and, falling on his knees in front of the stand, cried out, with bitter weeping, "Pray for me!" The effect of his conduct was thrilling. Everybody knew that he was sincere and moved by strong conviction. Saints and sinners were melted to tears, and there were sighs and sobs throughout the assembly. Broaddus was called on to pray. In all my life I have no recollection of having heard a prayer more tender, more comprehensive, and more moving than that which he offered. He seemed to be pleading with God face to face, and resolved to take no denial. When he closed his prayer the feelings of the congregation had been greatly intensified. There were not only sighs and weeping, but lamentations and loud crying throughout the audience.

Broaddus, who had great skill in conducting religious meetings, deemed it proper to check the noise and confusion in the assembly. In a very tender and gentle tone he insisted that religion is a reasonable thing—that the emotions must be subordinate to the judgment, and that all excesses in the meeting should be avoided. While he was speaking in this conservative strain, his son, a youth ripening into manhood, for whose salvation the father had cherished intense and almost despairing anxiety, all unconscious of the words of caution proceeding from the pulpit, pressed through the crowd and prostrated himself on the ground, not far from his father's feet, requesting most piteously that prayer should be made for him. It was not surprising that the astonished and delighted father forgot his own prudent cautions, and broke forth into louder demon-

strations of feeling than any which had been previously heard on the ground—feelings in which the audience felt a profound

sympathy.

There is no telling where the excitement would have ended. had not a hasty shower dispersed the congregation. The religious services were kept up in different tents till a late hour of the night. Had they not been interrupted at the stand they would probably have continued till the rising of the sun. Who but the heartless and the skeptical would have censured their continuance? Paul at Troas, in anticipation of leaving the brethren, preached till midnight; and, after the death and restoration to life of Eutychus, continued to talk "till the break of day." Was there imprudence in the continuance of the meeting? Was it not a glorious occasion? True, we did not have Paul to preach for us at the camp-meeting, but we had the gospel which he preached, were profoundly interested in the subjects which kept him awake during the night, and the occasion was little less interesting to us than was the departure of the apostle to the brethren at Troas.

On the whole, the meeting, while it did not equal in interest and fruitfulness the camp-meeting in Culpeper, was pleasant and profitable, and afforded great cause of gratitude to God. Many have rejoiced to this day, and will rejoice through eternal ages, that it was held.

### THE GREAT MASONIC EXCITEMENT.

TATHEN I was a boy the secrets of Masonry awakened much curiosity and led to many wild conjectures. Not a few people believed that Masons had intercourse with evil spirits, and multitudes suspected that their carefully preserved secrets must be intended to cover nefarious purposes. Some time about the year 1830 a man named Morgan, residing in Western New York, but, if I rightly remember, a native of Loudoun county, Va., undertook to divulge the secrets of Masonry. He wrote out, as he claimed, the signs and secrets of the first three degrees of the craft, and the work, printed in a small pamphlet, had a rapid and extensive circulation. In this he promised to make a full disclosure of the system. It produced, of course, an intense and general excitement. The Masons were filled with indignation, and others read the tract with the varied emotions of skepticism, amusement, and triumph.

In a short time Morgan was abducted, carried to Canada, and has not since been heard from. In a journey, some years since, I was driven by a coachman who told me that he was one of the stage-drivers that conveyed Morgan to the Canada border. His statements were minute and had verisimilitude, but I know not whether they were true. The abduction of Morgan greatly intensified the Masonic excitement. It was not merely a violation of law, but an attempt to suppress the freedom of speech, and an interference with personal liberty, as was supposed, by a secret and oath-bound society. The Masons were publicly charged with the crime. In a short while some of them were indicted, arrested, and brought to trial for participating in the abduction of Morgan. Many Masons were summoned as witnesses, and examined in court. This question was propounded to them: "Is there anything in the oaths and

obligations of Masons inconsistent with their duties as American citizens?" Some of the witnesses refused to answer the question, and were fined and imprisoned for contempt of court. Their course was approved, and their fines were promptly paid by the Masons of the country. Other witnesses affirmed that in their judgment, Masons were under no obligations to their fraternity not in harmony with their responsibilities as citizens. A few of the witnesses, however, testified that some of the obligations of Masons were in conflict with their duties to the State.

This last class of witnesses were denounced by the Masons with great bitterness as perjurers and scoundrels. To vindicate themselves, the abused witnesses published what they affirmed was the oath taken by Royal Arch Masons. By this oath they bound themselves to keep the secrets of a brother, committed to them as such, "murder and treason not excepted." It was promptly denied that there was any such clause in the oath of the Royal Arch degree. In the city of Boston eleven hundred Masons, many of them of the highest respectability, signed a document affirming that no such oath was taken by Royal Arch Masons.

The unfortunate witnesses who had expressed the opinion that the obligations of Masons and of American citizens were in conflict were in danger of being overwhelmed in disgrace. To extricate themselves from their embarrassment they called a convention of Masons to meet in the town of Canandaigua, N. Y. They made an earnest appeal to their brethren to rescue them from undeserved reproach. They stated, in substance, that they were called in court to testify on oath concerning the obligations of Masonry; that they found their oaths as Masons at variance; that they deemed it their duty to be governed by their oaths as citizens rather than as Masons; and that they relied on the honorable members of their fraternity for the vindication of their conduct.

A large convention of Masons, from different portions of the country, assembled at the time and place appointed. They adopted resolutions fully justifying the statements and course of the accused witnesses. They formally renounced Masonry;

requested Rev. David Bernard to write an *expose* of the system. He was a Baptist minister of learning, piety, and high standing, who died a few years since, leaving behind him a spotless reputation. This request of the convention gave rise to "Bernard's Light on Masonry," an octavo volume of several hundred pages, claiming to be a full exposition of Masonry from its first to its last degree. The volume was republished a few years since in Cincinnati.

The book has been discredited by some, because, according to his own confession, the author violated his solemn Masonic oaths. I do not propose to discuss the question of his guilt. I merely say that it is better to violate an improper oath than to keep it. An oath to do evil should be repented of and not observed. It would have been wiser for Herod to break his oath than to behead John the Baptist. The conspirators who bound themselves by an oath to take the life of Paul before they ate were laid under no obligation by their act to commit the murder. An oath may bind us to do what is right, or what has no moral character, but not to do what is wrong. Mr. Bernard deemed it right to violate his Masonic oaths, unwisely taken, to promote the public good. "To his own Master he standeth or falleth."

The Masonic excitement continued to spread, many Masons seceded from the society, and a still greater number, probably, declined attending the lodges. Opposition to Masonry became the nucleus of a political party. The Anti-Masons, as they were called, nominated Hon. William Wirt, of Baltimore, for the presidency. Among all the candidates for the office there has never been one more amiable, intelligent, disinterested, patriotic, and noble than Mr. Wirt; but he received only a small vote. The old political parties were too deeply rooted and pervasive to be set aside by a transient excitement. It was no reproach to Mr. Wirt that he was defeated in his candidacy, as men vote for a president, not on the ground of his intellectual or moral worth, but simply because of his party badge.

Soon after the appearance of Bernard's book I visited Rev. Abner W. Clopton, of Charlotte. He was an intense Anti-

Mason, and a voluntary agent for the sale of the book. He gave me a copy of it on condition that I would read it—a condition with which, in its full sense, I did not comply. With the exception of the Koran and the Book of Mormon, it is among the most unreadable books through which I have attempted to wade. I examined it, however, far enough to discern the genius of Masonry as it is developed in its pages. While I was reading the book I visited a relative of mine, Colonel S. Beverly Jeter, who, in the days of staging and travelling by private conveyances, kept a large hotel in Nottoway county, on the highway from Petersburg to Raleigh, North Carolina. was an enthusiastic Mason, having in his house a Masonic lodge and a Royal Arch chapter. I resolved to employ my knowledge of book Masonry to ascertain, so far as I might, in what measure it harmonized with the genuine Masonry of my relative. I threw into my conversations with him such scraps of Masonry as I could remember from my recent reading of Bernard's work. He took a great fancy to me, insisted on my preaching in his ball-room, gathered for me a large congregation of his neighbors, and treated me with the utmost hospitality. On the morning that I departed from his house, unwilling to leave him under a deception, I said to him, "I am not a Mason." He drew back as if he had been electrified, saying: "You are not a Mason! It is the strangest thing that I have ever known. You have made a dozen remarks since you have been here from which any Mason would have inferred that you are a Mason." I did not feel called on to reveal to him the source of my remarks. My experiment had disclosed the fact that the Masonry of Bernard and that of my kinsman were closely allied. After years of inquiry and thought on the subject I reached the undoubting conclusion that "Bernard's Light on Masonry' was a substantial revelation of the secrets and signs of Masonry as they were held and practiced in his time. What changes have been made in it since that period I know not.

As the reader may desire to know my impressions on Masonry, I will cheerfully give them. It is a self-protecting asso-

ciation, whose signs and secrets are limited to the means which they employ to know one another, and to guard against the intrusion of impostors. Every degree has its peculiar symbols and signs by which a brother may reveal himself as a Mason of that degree. Masons are usually encouraged to take degree after degree, in the hope of finding some wonderful light in the higher orders of the system, but when they reach the highest degree it is to learn that there is nothing there. Masonry has many beautiful symbols and fine moral sentiments. No man can follow the principles and teachings of the system without being a moral and useful man. It is not a religion, nor a substitute for it. Its aim is entirely secular. Its members are bound by frightful oaths to aid and support one another, and right faithfully do they in general fulfill their obligation. system originated, as it is now conceded, in the dark, Middle Ages, among the stone masons who erected the great cathedrals of Europe, and it has, doubtless, been modified from age to age, according to the necessities of the craft and the changing tastes of the times.

If asked how the statements of the seceding Masons can be reconciled with the testimony of the Boston Masons concerning the disputed clause in the oath of the Royal Arch degree, I can only say that it is probable that the oath was different in different chapters. It is impossible to suppose that so many respectable persons testified falsely from so slight a motive on either side. Both parties are worthy of credit, and a variation in the terms of the oath fully explains the seeming contradiction.

I am neither a Mason nor an Anti-Mason. If persons choose to become Masons, I know of no law by which they can be restrained from following their inclination. That persons expecting to travel extensively may be benefited by connection with the craft I do not doubt. My objection to joining them is not that they have secrets, signs, symbols, and paraphernalia, but that their oaths, as reported by Bernard, are revolting to my feelings, and the name of Christ, through whom alone acceptable petitions can be presented to God, is carefully excluded from their formal and published prayers.

## LVI.

### DISTINGUISHED MINISTERS.

F the prominent Baptist ministers who were in active life when I entered the ministry, and who have ceased from their labors, I have written so much in one form and another that I could now do little more than repeat my impressions concerning them. I cannot attempt even a brief sketch of many whose piety, abilities, and labors entitle them to be held in lasting and grateful remembrance. The pen of Dr. James B. Taylor has furnished biographies of many of them, and he himself has received a handsome memorial at the hand of his son, Dr. George B. Taylor. I have concluded to omit my recollections of the devout Abner W. Clopton, the eloquent Edward Baptist, the wise and practical Robert B. Semple, the logical Thornton Stringfellow, the indefatigable Luther Rice, the sensible O. B. Brown, and many others whom I need not mention, and confine my remarks to two ministers of rare talents and of great popularity and influence in their day.

#### ANDREW BROADDUS, OF CAROLINE.

I had heard him when I was quite young as a preacher of surpassing eloquence. One object of my visit to this city in 1823 was to hear this distinguished orator. It was quite a disappointment to me that he was not at the meeting which organized the Baptist General Association of Virginia. I first heard him in August of that year at Upper King and Queen meetinghouse, in King and Queen county. It was the place of the assembling of a flourishing church in his neighborhood, of which he was afterwards, if he was not then, pastor. He did not preach, but concluded the services after some other brother—I

think the late Dr. Witt—had preached. He commenced by reading the beautiful hymn of Medley:

"Mortals, awake, with angels join, And chant the solemn lay."

There was a peculiar melody in his voice. It was clear, soft, flexible, plaintive. I had never before listened to such reading. As he proceeded his countenance was lighted up with celestial ardor and his voice became more and more charming. When he reached the third stanza,

"Swift through the vast expanse it flew, And loud the echo rolled; The theme, the song, the joy was new, 'Twas more than heaven could hold,"

it really seemed to me that I could see the glad tidings, a mysterious mist, breaking over the battlements of heaven. As he continued the rapturous strain,

"Down through the portals of the sky
Th' impetuous torrent ran;
And angels flew with eager joy
To bear the news to man,"

the effect was almost overpowering. The whole audience was thrilled, electrified, transported.

I have heard many excellent hymn readers. Rice repeated hymns with inimitable simplicity. Spurgeon is a fine hymn reader. When tested by scholastic rules their reading might have been more accurate than that of Broaddus, but there was a pathos, a fascination in his reading which set all rules at defiance. His hearers did not care a straw whether his reading was accurate or inaccurate; they were charmed, impressed, delighted, and that was enough for them. The late Henry Keeling, himself a man of learning and taste, said that he would rather hear Andrew Broaddus read a hymn than to hear any other minister preach. I certainly preferred his reading of a hymn to the sermons of many preachers.

I was quite intimately acquainted with Broaddus for more

than twenty-five years. I heard him preach frequently under a great variety of circumstances, and it is my deliberate opinion that he was one of the most polished, eloquent, instructive, and attractive preachers that I have ever heard. His success in preaching depended largely on his frame of mind and his surroundings. He was very liable to fail in his sermons, but his failures were more instructive than the successes of other ministers. When his health, the weather, the pulpit, the congregation, the surroundings were all favorable, his preaching was absolutely entrancing. It was impossible not to listen, and listening, not to be absorbed in the discourse. I will mention a few facts illustrative of his pulpit power.

He preached the introductory sermon before the General Association at its first anniversary in Lynchburg, in 1824. His text, if I rightly remember, was Eph. iii: 8: "Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ." It was the first time that I heard him preach. I recollect the effect of the sermon better than the sermon itself. A subject in which I was deeply interested was occupying my thoughts. So completely was my mind absorbed by the discourse that I heard it without a wandering thought, and was amazed, at its conclusion, that the subject in which I had been so profoundly concerned had been entirely banished from my mind.

On the following Monday he preached a sermon in the Methodist church. A distinguished lawyer of the town, passing by its window on his way to the court-house, stopped a moment to hear what was passing. He heard Broaddus commence his sermon, and although he was standing under the burning rays of the sun, had important business demanding his attention at court, and heard the sheriff again and again calling his name vociferously, he did not move from his position till the close of the sermon released him from the fascination of the preacher.

As an expositor of the Scriptures, Broaddus was unrivalled. His preaching was mostly of the expository kind. He had a wonderful power of presenting in a vivid light the meaning of his text, with all its latent beauties and all its logical consequences. He had a brilliant imagination, but it was severely chastened and perfectly controlled by his judgment. Of all the preachers I have heard, and I have heard many, his sermons made the most distinct and abiding impression. I never listened to him without feeling that I had made his sermon my own. After the lapse of fifty years I have a distinct recollection of the outlines and some of the beautiful illustrations of his sermons.

One of these illustrations, just now occurring to my mind, I will state. He was speaking of the Messianic predictions. The first of the prophets drew a dim outline of the Messiah. From age to age they wrought at the picture. They added line after line, feature after feature, and tint after tint, until the perfected picture stood in bold relief before the observer. Being himself no mean artist, Broaddus drew the picture with consummate skill. It was suspended in the face of the world to await the coming of the Messiah. When Jesus of Nazareth appeared the picture bore an exact resemblance to him. He was the undoubted original. It was impossible to compare the prophetic portrait and the man of Nazareth and not be convinced of his claim to the Messiahship.

In gestures Broaddus, when at his ease, excelled any preacher that I have known. He was tall and well proportioned in person, of handsome features, and in his latter years of venerable appearance, and it seemed impossible for him to make an awkward gesture. If he had attempted an imitation of the grotesque he would have done it in a manner so easy and graceful as to command admiration. His action in speaking was exceedingly appropriate and expressive. It must be conceded, however, that he was somewhat fastidious in his manner. He never forgot it—never lost himself in his theme—an obliviousness essential to the highest effect of oratory. This undue particularity was strikingly described by "Father Schools," an old and eccentric man, remarkable for the bluntness of his manner and the quaintness of his remarks. After listening to

a sermon, he said to him: "Brother Broaddus, you were so long setting the table and *fixing* the plates, knives, and forks that we got tired of waiting for the dinner."

Broaddus was never designed to be a leader. He was easily led by persons far less intelligent and sound in judgment than he was himself. On religious doctrine he was firmly posted. He was what might be called a moderate Calvinist, and he could defend his views with remarkable clearness and force. In practical matters, however, he was timid, hesitating, and ready to follow a self-confident leader. This infirmity was of little moment while his intimate friend, Robert B. Semple, lived. He possessed in an eminent degree the qualities which Broaddus lacked. He was wise in counsel, firm in purpose—a predestined leader—and Broaddus loved him as a brother and followed him as a father.

On the whole, Broaddus had more genius than any minister with whom I have been acquainted. With very slender opportunities for improvement, and residing in a community which made but slight demand on his intellectual resources, he became a really great man. He would have been distinguished in any age, in any community, and in any profession. He was a respectable scholar, no mean portrait painter, had a rare gift for poetry, was a writer equally distinguished for the beauty of his style and the force of his reasoning, was a sermonizer of unusual capacity for unfolding the meaning of the Scriptures, and an orator of almost unrivalled power to interest and delight his hearers. Nothing but his modesty and shrinking timidity prevented him from occupying, as he was repeatedly invited to do, the most prominent Baptist pulpits of America.

To show that my estimate of the talents of Broaddus is not singular, I will mention a fact. When I had completed the above sketch, I met the Hon. R. M. T. Hunter, long a prominent member of the United States Senate from Virginia, whose home was in the neighborhood of that of Broaddus. I asked him for his estimate of Broaddus as an orator. He stated that he considered him the greatest speaker that he had ever heard. He was liable to make failures, but in his best mood for speak-

ing he excelled all the orators whom he had ever known. This is high testimony. Mr. Hunter is himself an orator of national reputation. He was for years the companion, if he was not the peer, of Webster, Clay, and Calhoun, and has enjoyed the opportunity of hearing the most distinguished orators of the country, with many from abroad, in the pulpit, the bar, and the forum, and he did not hesitate to pronounce Broaddus the finest speaker of them all.

# LVII.

# REV. JOHN KERR.

URING the first third of the present century Kerr stood alone among the Baptist preachers of Virginia—indeed, among all the preachers of all denominations that I heard preach—in his power to command the attention and move the passions of large, promiscuous audiences. I was almost ashamed to express my opinion of his abilities, lest I should be suspected of having a partial and extravagant judgment, until conversing with the late learned Dr. Hooper, of North Carolina, I found that he entertained the same opinion and felt a similar embarrassment in giving utterance to it. At all our Baptist Associations in Virginia he preached the third sermon, in unintermitted succession, on Lord's day. It was the post of honor, but difficult to fill, as the congregation was wearied by the two preceding discourses. To preach before Kerr did was unpleasant, as all were anxiously waiting to hear him; and to preach after him was simply impossible. I first heard him preach at the Dover Association with Alexander Campbell on the same day, from the same stand, and to the same audience. Campbell preached first, a long sermon, and my mind was so preoccupied with his novel views and manner of preaching that I heard Kerr at great disadvantage. His discourse seemed to me to be light and declamatory, but it produced a powerful impression on the hearers. I afterwards heard him preach frequently, and under a great variety of circumstances, and if I did not form a correct estimate of his abilities it was not from lack of opportunities for doing so, but from a defect in my judgment.

When I first saw Kerr he was about forty-five years old and in fine health. In personal appearance he was a man of a thousand. It would scarcely have been possible for him to appear in the most select assembly without attracting special attention. He was about the ordinary height, but much above the average

weight of men. He was symmetrically formed, neat in person, and graceful in carriage. He had such a head as Michael Angelo would have delighted to copy, and in the highest efforts of his genius could scarcely have excelled. It was bald, with the hair from the sides carefully combed up and knotted on the top. His eyes were keen as those of an eagle, but partially concealed by unusually thick, long, and overhanging eyebrows. His nose was rather disproportionately large, slightly aquiline, well suited for receiving snuff, with which, according to the custom of the day, it was usually abundantly supplied. His countenance was bright, mild, and benignant, with a commanding aspect, which clearly indicated that undue familiarity with its possessor should be avoided. In dress he was neat and stylish, but not fastidious.

Kerr's early education was quite defective. Brought up in a rural district of North Carolina, he had all the advantages of instruction afforded by the neighboring schools, which was limited in those days to reading, writing, and arithmetic. I do not suppose that he ever studied grammar. To him the arts and sciences never opened their inestimable treasures. He made no pretension to scholarship. His reading and studies were desultory and quite limited, but possessing an active and observant mind, he gathered a good stock of general and useful knowledge. He was a man of thought and action rather than of books. His views of Divine truth were in harmony with those of his denomination and of the evangelical Christians around him. He adopted the opinions advocated by Andrew Fuller before his works were known on this side of the Atlantic. Kerr was strongly opposed to hyper-Calvinism, and frequently turned against it the withering force of his logic and sarcasm. With Baptists opposed to liberal and systematic efforts for the spread of the gospel he had little patience, and occasionally subjected them to sharp ridicule. As an expounder of the Scriptures he was fanciful, indulging in the practice common in his day of spiritualizing his texts—a method of interpretation commenced, or at least employed, by the distinguished Origen in the third century, and which has been

adopted by many learned men, in different ages and countries, among whom may be named the eminent Baptist commentator, Dr. Gill. As a logician Kerr had no great skill. He thought clearly and reasoned soundly, but paid no attention to dialectics. In sermonizing, according to the modern standard, he did not excel. His sermons were mostly expository, discursive, and with little method. His preaching was largely extempore. He had a train of thought in his mind when he commenced speaking, but so great was its fruitfulness, and so ardent was his imagination, that he was liable to be diverted from it into new fields of discussion.

Kerr was a preacher—a most extraordinary one—and not much else. As a constant preacher he was not remarkable. His stock of information was too limited, and he was too little devoted to study, to enable him to interest and instruct an intelligent congregation through many successive years. It was hardly possible for his pulpit powers to be fully displayed in a house. That they might appear to the best advantage it was necessary that he should preach in the open air, in mild weather, under a natural or artificial shade, and before a vast congregation, which no ordinary voice could command.

Let us contemplate the scene. He rises slowly, and calmly looks over the sea of upturned faces. His appearance commands immediate attention. He reads his hymn with a clear, distinct, slow, and solemn voice. Every ear is attentive, and all but the deaf hear. By the time the introductory services are ended the audience is quiet, serious, and attentive. His text is quite likely to be a sublime passage from the Old or New Testament—like Ex. xxxiv: 6, 7; Isa. vi: 1-5; Rev. i: 17–20, &c. He commences his sermon with great deliberation. Every word is distinctly uttered; every sentence has a clear meaning. As he advances in his discourse his countenance brightens, his eyes sparkle, his gestures become more earnest, but not extravagant, his thoughts glow, his style is increasingly free, vigorous, and brilliant, and he is more and more absorbed in his subject. If he describes the crucifixion of Christ, the general judgment, or the happiness of heaven, he seems to speak from actual observation, and is as much impressed by the scenes as any of his hearers. He never loses his self-control, and never, by the intensity of his feelings, his hold of his theme.

At the end of two hours he closes his sermon. Let us now take a survey of his audience. They are standing around the pulpit as closely as they can be packed, every face is bathed in tears, and many of the hearers can give no account of the time or the manner of leaving their seats. They were entranced, were afraid of losing a word from the speaker's lips, and that is all they know of the matter. The impression is not confined to the ignorant and emotional. A judge having important business on hand consents to hear him for fifteen minutes, to notice his style of speaking, and at the end of two hours is surprised to find that he has been detained beyond his appointed time. A skeptical young man-rich, proud, and thoughtlessgoes near the pulpit to demonstrate that he can hear the orator without weeping, and after resisting his feeling for a time drops his head and sobs aloud. Cultivated men, unwilling to weep in public, avoid hearing him preach.

It is difficult to define the secret of Kerr's pulpit power. It was not learning, nor logic, nor the truth which he preached, important as that was, nor his voice, nor his gestures, but it was an indescribable pathos, an overwhelming tornado, in which all his powers played their appropriate parts. It was easy to criticise his style, his reasoning, his taste, and especially his expositions of Scripture, but, as Dr. Hooper said, after listening to one of his entrancing discourses, any man would have been ashamed to criticise such a sermon.

Luther Rice used to say: "He is the greatest preacher who does the most good." Judged by this standard, Kerr was a great preacher. I have no means of estimating the fruits of his ministry. I know, however, that the success of his preaching in Richmond, and in many other places, was marked. Hundreds were converted by his itinerant and desultory labors, to say nothing of the results of his regular ministrations. He possessed eminent gifts for protracted meeting labors. They

came into use in the latter part of his life, but rarely called his powers into exercise. Had he devoted his life to evangelical labors, as do Moody and other evangelists, he would, according to human judgment, have turned the world upside down.

As Broaddus and Kerr were the most distinguished Baptist ministers of Virginia in the early part of this century, the reader may desire to see a comparison of them. In many respects they were singularly unlike each other. Broaddus was the greater genius of the two. He was an orator, a theologian, a poet, a writer, a man of exquisite taste. Kerr was the greater orator. He was a born orator. He excelled in nothing but public speaking, and in that he was unrivalled. As a preacher, Broaddus was more instructive and charming; Kerr was more commanding and impressive. In preaching, Broaddus rarely or never forgot himself-his voice, gestures, style, and the arrangement of his thoughts received the strictest attention: Kerr was lost and transported by his theme. Broaddus had more culture; Kerr more readiness in extempore speaking. As a constant preacher, Broaddus excelled. His sermons were always full of thought, carefully drawn from the sacred Scriptures. Kerr succeeded better as an occasional or an itinerant preacher. In a large, promiscuous assembly in Virginia, nine out of ten of the hearers would have preferred the preaching of Kerr, but the remaining tenth would have contained a large proportion of the more cultivated and refined auditors. Had the trial been made in the best-informed city congregations the proportion would have been greatly changed. Broaddus moulded public sentiment; Kerr gave it power and influence. Broaddus was the Cicero and Kerr was the Demosthenes among modern orators. We have ministers in the present day who excel them in learning, hermeneutics, theology, homiletics, and the like—all of great importance in the ministry—but in the power to interest, command, fascinate, move, and melt promiscuous congregations, I know not the peers of Broaddus and Kerr. I must add, for the encouragement of my brethren in the ministry, that many preachers of far inferior talents have done much more by the diligent employment of

their gifts to build up and establish Baptist churches than did either of the eloquent ministers who attracted so much attention and gained so much applause.

I am convinced, by long-continued observation, that orators, like poets, are born, not made. Study and practice may make an eloquent speaker, a logician, a sound instructor, but no measure of study and instruction can make an orator of one who has not a natural aptitude for public speaking. The gift may be greatly improved by study and instruction, but where it is possessed of a high quality it will display its power in spite of all the disadvantages of the lack of culture and of favorable opportunities for its exercise. Kerr would have been an orator had he been a blacksmith, a ditcher, or an ostler.

# LVIII.

# REMOVAL TO ST. LOUIS.

IN the year 1849 I went to this city and took charge of the Second, then the only white Baptist church in the place. Its pulpit had been rendered vacant by the removal of Rev. S. W. Lynd to the Theological Seminary, then recently established in Covington, Kentucky. St. Louis had just been fearfully scourged by the prevalence of cholera. The epidemic caused a general panic, drove most of the people from their homes, and sent several thousands of them to untimely graves. I was prevented for some time from entering on my pastoral labors by the scourge, and when I commenced them the disease was still lingering in the city. The church, reduced in number, contained about two hundred and seventy-five members. Among these were many brethren of intelligence, piety, great devotion to the interests of the church, and prosperous in business, if not rich. It was in some respects one of the best churches that I have known. It had recently completed a house of worship—then one of the finest in the city—and its members evinced a praiseworthy liberality in the cause of Christ. My first sermon was preached to a good congregation in October, 1849, from Col. i: 29: "Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom, that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." I endeavored to present the theme, the manner, and the end of the apostolic ministry as an example for my imitation while I should labor among them.

There were peculiar difficulties to be encountered in my new field of labor—difficulties which, I presume, all pastors in that and similar spheres of activity have experienced. The church was composed of heterogeneous materials. Few of them had been converted and baptized in the city. They were immigrants from England, Scotland, and Wales, and from almost every State of the Union. They had their peculiar views of preaching, music, the manner of conducting public worship, church discipline, &c., and these were as various as were the tastes and training of the people in the several regions from which the members came. It was almost impossible to say, do, or propose anything which would secure universal approbation. This diversity, however, led to great liberality and forbearance among the brethren. There was a commendable readiness to yield to the decision of the majority, but unfortunately this submission did not include a hearty assent to that judgment. Had the members of the church been of harmonious views and aims it would have been of almost unequalled efficiency.

A greater diversity of views on religious subjects prevailed without than within the church. A large portion of the population was European, fully imbued with the spirit of skepticism. In preaching to them nothing could be taken for granted. The inspiration of the Scriptures, moral responsibility, the existence of God and of a future state, and even the depravity of human nature, were by many boldly denied or artfully called in question.

As there were unusual obstacles to overcome, so there were extraordinary incitements to activity in this new sphere of toil. The rapid increase of the population, the spirit of inquiry and self-reliance engendered by freedom from ancient opinions and customs, the constant conflict of discordant views, and the certainty that the people of St. Louis must eventually exert a moulding influence over the religious faith and character of millions of inhabitants in the great Mississippi Valley, were well suited to impress on the heart of a minister the transcendent importance of his work. He seemed to be sowing seed that would increase, not merely a hundred, but more than a thousand-fold. It was impossible to live in such a city without imbibing its spirit of enterprise, hopefulness, and perseverance, and this spirit was as fruitful in religious as in secular pursuits.

My aim from the beginning of my labors in St. Louis was not chiefly to gather a large church, but to multiply throughout the city agencies for its evangelization. In this aim many

members of the church heartily sympathized with me. Arrangements were soon made for the support of two ministers for a period of three years. One-half of this amount was subscribed by the members of the church, and the other half by the Boards of the Baptist General Association of Missouri and of the Southern Baptist Convention. To co-operate with these ministers it was proposed to organize two churches from members dismissed from the Second church and such unassociated Baptists as could be found in the city. Two noble bands of brethren and sisters went out from the Second church. One formed the Third Baptist church, in the western part of the city, and the other, Zion (now the Fourth) Baptist church, in North St. Louis. The next step was to secure pastors for these infant churches. Rev. Joseph Walker, of Virginia, became the pastor of the Third, and I. E. Owen, from the Theological Seminary at Covington, the pastor of Zion, or the Fourth church. I need not attempt to give the history of They lived, grew, and are now strong and these churches. flourishing.

The plan of sending out colonies from the church under my charge produced a result which I had not anticipated. The members who went out to organize the new churches were those most in harmony with my views and most readily influenced by my counsels. My position in the Second church was weakened by the measure. The restless, discordant members remained, and rendered my situation for a time unpleasant. I received no discourtesy worth noticing from any member of the church, but some of them were dissatisfied with my ministry. They were not nourished by it. They had been used to a different kind of food. I did not blame them for their taste. I was deeply conscious of the imperfection of my ministry, and would gladly have made it more instructive and profitable. In a short time a way of deliverance from this embarrassment was suggested. It was proposed to erect a new house of worship in an inviting and growing part of the city, that the church should be divided, and that I might choose whether I would go to the new or remain in the old house with

the members who wished to continue under my ministry. The scheme was not fully matured, but awakened great interest, met with general approbation, and certainly opened an encouraging prospect for the Baptists of St. Louis.

The Lord, however, had another purpose concerning my labors. The health of my wife declined. The climate was supposed to be unfavorable to it. She was intensely anxious to return to her native State. I did not myself believe that the climate was unpropitious to her health, but I was unwilling to assume the responsibility of retaining her where she and some of her medical advisers thought her life was imperilled. I seemed shut up by divine providence to the necessity of changing my climate. On my visiting Richmond, the pulpit of the Gracestreet Baptist church being vacant by the resignation of Dr. Kingsford, I was called to occupy it. Attending the session of the General Association, held in Norfolk about this time, I was welcomed with such cordiality and received such proofs of the general desire of the Baptists for my return to the State that I yielded a reluctant compliance with the call of the Grace-street church.

In the summer of 1852 I returned to St. Louis to dissolve my relation with the church and make arrangements for my return to Virginia. In some respects the change was pleasant. I had not been long enough absent from Richmond to weaken the bonds which bound me to the brethren there. Among them I knew I should find more congenial society and a less difficult field of labor. Still the change was a painful one. I had formed many dear friendships in St. Louis. It was indeed a difficult field of labor, but one of surpassing interest and promise. My prospect for usefulness was never more cheering than in the hour when I was called to leave it. With a great struggle and a heavy heart I left the growing emporium of what was then the West to return to the quiet city of Richmond.

In reviewing my life in the West, after the lapse of nearly thirty years, I may be indulged in a few remarks. I seriously question whether any portion of it of equal length has been so useful as that which I spent in St. Louis. While there I bap-

tized probably one hundred and fifty persons, many of whom became valuable church members. The Second church was about as strong when I resigned as it was when I assumed its pastorate. The organization of the Third and Fourth churches marked an era in the progress of the St. Louis Baptists. The First church had been merged into the Second, and this stood alone until the organization of the Third and Fourth.

In one respect I was greatly disappointed in my settlement in St. Louis. Judging from its size and commercial prosperity, I supposed that it wielded a religious influence in Missouri like that which Richmond exerted in Virginia. In this I was quite mistaken. The influence of the St. Louis Baptists in the State when I resided there was very inconsiderable. It was not the seat of any of the denominational boards. The Western Watchman, a Baptist paper, was published there, but its circulation was limited and its influence feeble. Besides, there was, if I did not misinterpret the signs, a prejudice among the country brethren against metropolitan influence—a prejudice which has by no means been restricted to Missouri Baptists.

On the whole, I deem it a fortunate event in my life that I lived in St. Louis. It gave me a knowledge of mankind which otherwise I should not have acquired. It taught me the necessity of self-reliance—a virtue for the cultivation of which my circumstances had been previously unfavorable. My intimate intercourse with brethren of widely different views corrected many of the stereotyped notions derived from my early training. I was especially favored in returning to my native State before there had been any material change of my tastes, habits, and opinions, rendering me uncongenial with my early companions and diminishing my power to do them good. I have known several instances of ministers returning to their old fields of labor after many years of absence to find that their influence was gone and their prospects of usefulness sadly beclouded. By the good providence of God I was restored to my early field of labor in time to retain the influence which I had secured by nearly thirty years' labor in it.

# LIX.

## SPIRITISM.

I USE the term "Spiritism" to denote a class of phenomena which was common and excited great interest in St. Louis when I resided there, without vouching for the correctness of the term. About this time the Misses Fox, of Rochester, New York, caused great excitement in the country by claiming that they held intercourse with disembodied spirits. They, or some persons adopting their views and practicing their arts, came to St. Louis, exhibited their skill, attracted great crowds, and made many converts to their faith. In a short time the whole city was filled with experiments in spiritism. It was soon discovered that the Foxes and their associates were not the only spiritual mediums. Many persons found, or supposed they found, that by certain manipulations they could have communications with invisible spirits. The subject caused a great stir, and was the incessant theme of earnest discussion in the city.

I was incredulous concerning these manifestations, and supposed they were the result of collusion or of excited imaginations, and gave free utterance to my incredulity. A venerable brother, a distinguished physician of the city, said to me: "Beware how you speak on the subject. It is a question of testimony. Christianity is based on testimony. If you overthrow the laws of testimony you subvert Christianity." I was impressed with the soundness of his remarks, and resolved to investigate spiritism.

Arrangements were made for this purpose at the house of my friend, Dr. Coons, who was intensely skeptical about the claims of spiritism, and quite confident that he could expose the delusion. The medium selected for the occasion was a respectable young lawyer, recently from Virginia. About a dozen persons, all as incredulous as were the doctor and myself concerning spiritism, were present by invitation. A small table was

placed in the room. The medium and three or four other persons placed their hands on it. After sitting awhile the medium said: "If there is a spirit present, will it move the table?" The table was gently moved. He continued: "If the spirit will spell out its name as I call over the alphabet, let it move the table." The table was again moved. By the usual process in such exhibitions, the name Harriet Coons was spelt. It was the name of an infant which had died a few weeks before in that very room. The unexpected revelation deeply affected the doctor and his wife, by reminding them of their recent bereavement, and made it desirable to call for some other spirit. The medium said: "If there is another spirit present, will it move the table?" Instantly the table was moved. All whose hands were on it testified that it moved much more strongly than it did before. By the usual process the name of Georgia Ficklin was spelt. The real or supposed spirit indicated a desire to communicate with Mrs. Coons. The following sentence was addressed to her: "Grieve not; your sister and children are happy."

In this communication several things were worthy of special notice. Georgia Ficklin was a sister of Mrs. Coons, who, six months before this time, had died in this room. Supposing that the departed had been able to communicate with her sister, it is not possible to conceive a more appropriate and comforting message than the one delivered. There were two remarkable facts connected with it. When the communication had reached the point, "Grieve not; your sister and chi-," the medium said: "Is it child you wish to spell? If so, move the table." There was no movement. The alphabet was called over, and children was spelt out. It then occurred to Dr. Coons and his wife that they had lost another child—an infant—in Fredericksburg some years before—an event of which they had been entirely-oblivious till the word "children" was spelt; and the event was certainly unknown to the operator. The other was this: The doctor and his wife stated that the name "Georgia" was misspelt—that the family spelt it Georgey. A sister, near the age of the deceased, who

was intimately acquainted with her, replied: "No! my sister always insisted that Georgia was the proper way to spell her name."

Whence the message came I know not, but I am quite sure that there was no collusion or fraud in the case. The persons engaged in the experiment were above all suspicion. The medium declared, and there was every reason to believe his statement, that he knew nothing of the departed whose names were spelt out. It was perfectly clear that he aimed to put child instead of children in the message. I sat by the table, held it, and watched carefully, and with skeptical eyes, every movement of the whole process, and I could discern not the slightest evidence of trickery.

Had this been a solitary case, I might have concluded that the persons engaged in it were laboring under a strange hallucination, or that there was some deep-laid scheme of deception, practiced without any hope of reward or even of amusement. The case, however, did not stand alone. Throughout the city, among all classes of society and persons of all religious persuasions, and infidels as well, similar experiments were made, with like and even more remarkable results. One of these cases I may mention. A lady of high character and social position, a member of the church of which I was pastor, delicate and feeble, found by some experiments that she was a medium. Laying her hand on a large centre-table, it would follow her around the room, by the mere exercise of her will, with a force which none could resist. A gentleman who denounced all these manifestations as delusions or frauds was called in to hold the table. By no force except that exerted by the laying of the hand of a feeble woman on its top, the table dragged the strong man around the room as if he had been a mere tov. He told me himself that he bruised his hands in his unavailing efforts to arrest the movement of the table. He added: "It is nothing but electricity." I mention this case because it was simply a physical manifestation, and to be judged of by the exercise of the senses. The incredulity that would set it aside would subvert all testimony, all history, and all faith.

These physical effects were generally connected with intelligent communications.

I was compelled, as a minister of the gospel, to investigate the moral bearing of these phenomena. Several well-informed and respectable members of the church under my charge became spiritualists. They not only accepted these manifestations as the work of spirits, but believed that they were adapted to shed great light on the condition, duties, and destinies of men. Their evident tendency was to subvert Christianity. After much inquiry on the subject, I reached and published the following conclusions:

1. There is no proof that any of these communications come from spirits. They may result from physiological or psychological laws not yet understood. In support of this theory, plausible arguments have been adduced.

2. If these communications come from spirits, it is clear that many of them were ignorant and evil spirits. Some of their

messages are puerile, false, impure, and blasphemous.

3. If these manifestations are from spirits, there is no certain proof that any of them are from good spirits. Some of the messages are good in themselves—as that addressed to Mrs. Coons—but as bad men use fair words to deceive the simple, how can we know that evil spirits do not resort to a similar artifice to effect their wicked purposes?

4. Could it be proved that some of these messages are sent by good spirits, what evidence should we have of their capacity to instruct us? The supposition that all good spirits are wise is perfectly gratuitous. It is supported neither by analogy nor revelation. It is more probable that they exist with every degree of intellectual compass and intelligence, from that of the tender infant to the shining cherub. Diversity is one of nature's great laws.

Lastly, could it be shown that some of these communications proceed from spirits holy, good, and wise, it may well be maintained that we do not need their instruction. We have a revelation from the infinite Spirit, authenticated by prophecies fulfilled, miracles confirmed by trustworthy testimony, and

fruits of piety constantly before our eyes. The Scriptures are able to make us wise unto salvation, and wiser we need not be. If spirits teach what is in harmony with the Scriptures, their ministry may be dispensed with. If an angel from heaven preach any other gospel than that preached by Christ, and communicated by him to the apostles, let him be accursed.

By such arguments I endeavored to arrest the tide of spiritism. To deny the reality of the phenomena bearing that name would have been to subject myself to the scorn and derision of the intelligent observers in St. Louis. Like many other excitements which seemed to threaten the foundations of Christianity, it has, in a great measure, passed away. It is not a religion. It cannot by any ingenuity be manufactured into a religion. Admitting that these strange manifestations are from spirits, good and bad, they tend, upon due consideration, strongly to confirm Christianity. That there are such spirits exerting, in ways unknown to us, a mighty influence on the affairs of men, is the plain teaching of revelation. Would it be wonderful if, in the present as in the past, these invisible and active agents should sometimes pass the boundaries which commonly separate the spiritual and the material? In this matter, as in all others, true wisdom lies in maintaining an inquiring and an independent spirit, receiving no facts not confirmed by clear and honest testimony, and adopting no theory except upon a broad and careful collation of facts. Of the reality of these manifestations I have no question, and could have none without renouncing the evidence of my senses and the dictates of my understanding, which God has given me for my guidance in life; but they have not been observed by me on a scale sufficiently wide, and with a care sufficiently accurate, to justify me in adopting a theory concerning them. I wait, as the world must wait, for further developments.

# LX.

# A PERILOUS JOURNEY.

I HAVE referred in another place to the prevalence of cholera in the West during my residence in St. Louis. It is a terrible scourge, not less to be dreaded, when it prevails epidemically, than yellow fever. In the summer of 1850 the cholera quite abounded in the city of St. Louis, though it could hardly be accounted an epidemic. Many of the citizens left as usual for their various summer retreats. Mrs. Jeter, accompanied by friends, visited her relatives in Virginia. My purpose was to remain at my post during the summer, but my health became much impaired. I was seized with symptoms of cholera, and, if I did not have it in a mild form, I was sorely threatened with it. It was deemed prudent that I should leave the city for the restoration of my health, and I concluded to follow my wife to Virginia.

At that time the usual travel between the East and the West was by steamers on the Mississippi and Ohio rivers, and by stages connecting with them. My trip from St. Louis to Cincinnati by steamer was devoid of interest. On reaching the latter city, where I purposed to spend the Lord's-day, I found that cholera was prevailing to an alarming extent. On Monday the steamer to Pittsburg was crowded with passengers, many of them fleeing from the plague, and some of them with only the remnants of their households. Our trip up the river was attended with much anxiety, but with no loss of life.

The passengers from Virginia landed at Guyandotte early in the morning, to learn that the stage by which they hoped to be conveyed eastward had been gone about half an hour. There were seven travellers for this route, and it was proposed to hire an extra stage to carry them on their journey. The agent, however, required the full price for nine seats, and, the majority of the passengers refusing to bear their proportionate share of the additional expense, the scheme was abandoned. I, with others, yielded to the necessity of spending the day in Guyandotte, little dreaming what would befall us.

A young man whom I had known in Virginia, an agent of the stage line, accompanied us in the steamer from Cincinnati. He greatly dreaded an attack of cholera, and was fleeing from it. Late in the afternoon I saw him sitting under the shade of a tree in the yard of the hotel, wrapped in a thick overcoat, though the weather was very warm. On inquiry I found that he had been vomiting for some time, and was fast sinking into that cold, clammy, pulseless condition known as collapse, which usually soon ended in dissolution. He was unwilling to go alone into his room, as he was timid, and taking his bed seemed to him as yielding to the disease. At my earnest request, he retired to his room and called for medical aid.

About the same time a lady who resided in Staunton, a sister of Judge Baldwin, one of the most distinguished citizens of the State, was prostrated with the same disease. It had not previously prevailed in Guyandotte. It is not possible to describe the panic which was excited when it became known that two cases of cholera had occurred at the notel, in the centre of the town. It is not strange that the alarm should have been great. The cholera was sudden in its attacks, rapid in its progress, and fearful in its results. Towns had been depopulated by it, and medical skill was of little avail in its treatment. No plague was ever more fierce and desolating than this.

Whatever might be the intensity of the panic or the ravages of the disease, I was shut up to the necessity of remaining in Guyandotte till the departure of the stage the next morning. I yielded to the necessity as best I could, but it was certainly to me the most trying and anxious night that I have passed, excepting, possibly, that on which I was tossed on the billows of the Atlantic on my return from Florida, in constant dread of shipwreck.

I had unmistakable symptoms of cholera. I knew that quiet and sleep were necessary for me, and possibly essential for the preservation of my life, but for me there was neither sleep nor rest. My room was midway between those of the suffering cholera patients. To the one room or the other I was constantly called to offer such consolations as I could to the sick, and to engage in prayer that their lives might be spared or that they might be prepared for their end.

The Staunton lady was a Presbyterian, and as composed and hopeful as under such circumstances might have been expected; but her faith was put to a severe trial. Far from home and, with the exception of a friend or two, from those whom she loved and by whom she was loved, she was suddenly attacked by the fellest of diseases, and certainly had great need of strong faith and of abundant grace.

The case of the young man was one of the most touching which has fallen under my notice. He was of respectable and pious connections. He early made a profession of religion and was baptized. Engaged in a business which withdrew him from his religious privileges and led him into worldly associations, he neglected his solemn duties, and if he did not make shipwreck of his faith he chilled his piety, obscured his hope, and covered his end with gloom. Handing to me his purse and watch, to be preserved for his kindred, he said, with a solemnity and emphasis which I can never forget, "Oh, did I ever think that I should die such a death as this!" Having taken leave of me, he deliberately turned over in his bed to die. The sunken features, the cadaverous complexion, and the cold and clammy perspiration furnished decisive proof that his gloomy anticipations were not delusive.

At length the morning came, and never was its light more welcome to an anxious soul than it was to me. I had not, as I now remember, slept a moment during the night. I had been in constant apprehension of an attack of cholera, and it sprang, not from an excited imagination, but from symptoms which I knew to be premonitory of the disease. It was a serious matter to be arrested by cholera under any circumstances, but I knew that if I were seized with it in Guyandotte, in that hour of alarm, I could hope for no attentions beyond the visit of a physician and the occasional calls of a servant.

At early dawn I was on the stage for Charleston, Kanawha. Of the seven travellers who missed the stage on the previous morning, and of several others who were waiting for a passage, only two of us left that city. The rest had not all been attacked by cholera, but had all been arrested in their journey by the malady in their own persons or in the persons of those with whom they were associated. Soon after I left the town I fell asleep, and did not awake until I reached the breakfasting house. I was greatly refreshed by my slumber. No shipwrecked mariner ever reached land with greater joy than I experienced when I perceived that I had escaped the threatening and direful plague, and was refreshed and invigorated by the bracing country air. A travel of a day or two brought me to the White Sulphur Springs, where the sight of friends and the use of the healing water banished the symptoms of cholera and made me in a measure forget the troubles of my journey.

The precise results of the outbreak of the cholera in Guyandotte I never learned. The time antedated telegraphs, railroads, and the rapid diffusion of news. The two patients to whom I have referred died shortly after I left the village. I have reason to suppose that the ravages of the disease were scarcely commensurate with the intensity of the panic.

To me the trial was profitable as well as painful. Often in the course of my ministry I have had occasion to refer to the sorrowful exclamation of the dying young man: "Oh! did I ever think that I should die such a death as this!" Thousands have had cause to utter the same sad lament. Well would it be for the young, and the old, too, if they should ever live as they would wish to die. They know not, and they cannot know, when they will be called to leave the world; but when the summons comes, prepared or unprepared, they must obey it.

# LXI.

### FASHIONS.

All classes of people have their fashions. They may be simple or artificial, economical or expensive, modest or indelicate, but they invariably indicate the taste of the people among whom they prevail. American fashions are almost incessantly changing. Could accurate pictures have been taken of all which have been current since my boyhood, they would furnish a gallery worth seeing. It should be remembered that nearly half my life was passed in the country, where fashions are usually followed at a distance, and with many additions and subtractions.

My first recollection of fashion is that old men, especially those of the better class, wore short "breeches," as they were called, with knee-buckles, and long stockings, closely fitting the legs. Young men and old men, not governed by fashion, wore pantaloons or breeches with legs descending to the ankles. In a short while pantaloons supplanted breeches, except in rare cases of old or eccentric men. Pantaloons were worn mostly without suspenders, but gradually their convenience and comfort brought them into general use. Pantaloons, made at first to fit the limbs, soon began to be cut according to the arbitrary dictates of fashion. At one time the legs were of enormous size—large enough for mill-bags—and at another they were made of elastic stuff and fitted the limbs as closely as the skin. Boots underwent changes quite as striking as did pantaloons. When I was a boy old men wore fair-top boots. They were long enough to reach the knee, with a broad belt of smooth leather, of its natural color, around the top, and the remainder polished with blacking. They were pressed down and rumpled about the legs so as to expose to view a considerable portion of the stocking between the upper edge of the boot and the

knee-buckle. The dandies wore boots of a different style. Their legs were stiff, reaching rather more than half way to the knee, cut at the top and in front in the form of a heart, with a black silk tassel suspended from the lowest point of the indentation. They were called "suarrow boots"—why I know not, nor am I sure that my spelling of them is correct. Boots in my earlier days were rather a mark of gentility, but they soon became common, and were worn alike by gentlemen and by wagoners, at first over and afterwards under the legs of pantaloons. Coats have undergone a great variety of changes within the period of my memory. They have been made with rolling and standing collars, and with long tails, short tails, wide tails, narrow tails, and some without tails. The Methodists all wore round-breasted coats, such as were fashionable in the days of the Wesleys. Even Methodist boys had coats of this style. Ouite likely a Methodist would have been expelled from the society if he had appeared publicly in a fashionably-cut coat. It is certain that he would have been censured and reproved for his sinful conformity to the world. For many years the Methodists firmly stood their ground against all changes of fashion. At length, however, the round-breasted was gradually succeeded by the frock coat among them. It was recommended by its simplicity and comfort, and, perhaps, forty or fifty years ago it became as rare to see a round-breasted coat as a few years previous it had been to notice a frock coat. The high-crowned hat, the mark and the absurdity of civilization, has maintained its place through all the mutations of fashion. Its brim has been sometimes wide and sometimes narrow; its color has changed from black to brown, from brown to white, and from white to black again; its form has frequently varied from the high to the low crown, sometimes narrowing and again widening towards the top, and it has been manufactured of wood, straw, and leather, and of wool, cotton, and fur; but still the stove-pipe crown rules Christendom. Shirts have played no inconsiderable part in the world of fashion. Old men and dandies were adorned with ruffled shirts sixty years ago. Most men had their shirt bosoms plain or pleated, and

wore them concealed, or more or less exposed, according to the prevailing custom, or their various tastes and fancies. Collars have changed, I know not how often, from wide to narrow, and from standing to turning. Collars detached from the shirts were not used until about the year 1826, and they did not become common without delay and considerable opposition.

Whether it is from instinct or training that women are peculiarly devoted to fashion I know not. The fact is unquestionable. All the cautions in the Scriptures against fondness for dress and costly ornaments are addressed to the gentler sex. My observations have shown that the warnings have not lost their appropriateness. In my early years women's attire, within the range of my observation, was exceedingly simple. Five or six yards of calico or cambric were deemed an ample pattern for the dress of a lady of ordinary proportions. It was made with gores, so as to admit of due expansion in walking. It was perfectly plain in its style, and free from ruffles, furbelows, and pleats. The bonnet of those days was designed to cover the head and to protect the face from the rays of the sun, and it was well adapted to its purposes. It was sparingly supplied with bows and ribbons. All the other garments and adornments of the sex were in harmony with these chief articles of apparel. The Methodist ladies of the time contributed much to restrain the extravagances of fashion. They had a style of dress peculiar to themselves. It was simple, neat, convenient, and, as I then thought and still think, very handsome. For some years they maintained their style with unflinching simplicity, but the change of taste and tide of fashion gradually weakened their principles and swept away their peculiarities of dress. It came to pass that Methodist women could not be distinguished by their vestments from other people.

The first manifest departure from the old fashions was a dress short in front and long behind. It greatly offended the common taste, but it was fashionable, and from the law of fashion there was no appeal. The garment was modified by the varying tastes of its wearers, but those who took the lead in fashion wore it half way to the knees before and trailing in the dust

behind, but it was far from rivalling in length and gorgeousness the train of a modern belle.

While I was quite young the practice of tight lacing became common. It was deemed necessary not only to exhibit the bust, but by compression to give it a graceful form. Of all the fashions that I have ever known this was carried to the most ridiculous excess. A small waist was deemed a mark of refinement and essential to beauty. To secure this mark of perfection young ladies laced themselves with strong cords attached to bed-posts, on which they bore the full weight of their bodies, or had the service performed by muscular waiting maids, who exerted their utmost strength to compress the waists of their young mistresses. I cannot vouch for the correctness of the statement, but I often heard it affirmed that some young women caused their breast bones to be lapped by their tight lacing. I remember well seeing a girl who was so severely laced that an ornament worn on her breast moved up and down as she breathed, because her body had no room for expansion. In those days obesity was held in abhorrence. Young ladies who had a tendency to corpulence sought to aid the effect of lacing by the most abstemious diet and a free use of vinegar. Some of them, naturally fine-looking, reduced themselves by these processes to a ghostly appearance. Nor was this all, nor the worst. According to the testimony of physicians, many women of fine constitutions and fair promise of long life brought themselves to early graves, and others rendered themselves invalids and sufferers for life, by following an arbitrary and senseless fashion. It long maintained its hold on society, but finally disappeared, leaving everybody amazed that it should ever have prevailed.

In my boyhood the aged people used to tell of the days when hoops were in fashion as an article of dress. In old pictures the wondering youth had an opportunity of seeing how their grandmothers and great-grandmothers appeared when they were encompassed by these badges of gentility. The fashion seemed extremely ridiculous. It was supposed that a mode of dress so grotesque and inconvenient could never make

its appearance again. It was the relic of a barbarous age that could not be thought of without amusement. It is as true of fashion as of history that it constantly repeats itself. Contrary to all expectation and all reasoning, the hoop-dress came again into fashion. At first the hoops were small, giving to the dress a graceful expansion. Gradually they were enlarged to enormous proportions. A lady fashionably dressed could not enter a door of ordinary size without tilting her hoops. In full dress she could not ride in a carriage with her escort. Her hoops, in their highest style, would have made no inconvenient tent for a soldier. The singularness of the dress was lost sight of in its commonness. Had it come suddenly into use in its full proportions, the boys would have hooted it on the streets; but it was introduced so stealthily that it created no surprise and afforded no amusement. It departed as it came, slowly and imperceptibly, leaving not a trace behind it. It must certainly be accounted one of the freaks of feminine fancy. Small hoops, to give the dress the needed fullness, may be convenient and graceful, but the expanded hoops, which turned gentlemen from the sidewalks and required for their wearers double seats in the church and in the concert-room, were surely commended neither by convenience nor good taste.

In nothing have females displayed greater ingenuity than in the manufacture of their bonnets. In size, form, material, color, and adornments, and for all the purposes of comfort and display, they have undergone perpetual changes. It would seem scarcely possible that they should admit of any new modification. We pass by many forms of this needed and beautiful article of woman's apparel to notice the "navarino" bonnet, because "thereby hangs a tale." We know not whence came the name. It was derived probably from the place where it was first manufactured. It was made of paper, handsomely colored and printed, and of most becoming form. It came into general use nearly fifty years ago. When it was in its highest glory a camp-meeting was held in the neighborhood of Richmond. The ladies of the city and vicinity appeared in great numbers at the meeting adorned with their navarinoes.

There came up a rain which, for its profusion, has scarcely been exceeded since the Noachian flood. The ladies were compelled, through torrents of rain and overflowing streams, to return to their homes. In spite of umbrellas, carriages, and shawls the navarinoes yielded to the influence of the penetrating rain and the all-pervading dampness. At first they became soft, then lost their graceful form, and finally dropped to pieces. All along the roads leading from the encampment the *debris* of the bonnets were scattered, and the ladies reached their homes with their heads as little protected as they are by the modern adornment called a bonnet, and worn on the roll of hair affixed to the back of the head. Navarinoes soon went out of fashion in Richmond and its vicinity.

Time would fail us, if memory did not, to tell of the ceaseless changes in form, in texture, in color, in combination, through which all the articles of woman's wardrobe have been passing from the time of my earliest recollection down to the present day. I must not, however, overlook a fashion pertaining to female manners. Nearly fifty years ago there prevailed among ladies of the higher classes a fashion called the "Grecian bend." It was a certain stoop or carriage of the body supposed to be graceful, and according to the taste and refinement of the Greeks. This was soon followed by the "agony"-I do not remember its descriptive epithet—an artificial wriggling of the person, deemed by those who practiced it the very perfection of feminine cultivation and art. These freaks of fashion were never universal, but were earnestly adopted by ladies who had leisure and were ambitious to place themselves among the leaders of fashion. These customs perhaps belong rather to the class of affectations than of fashions, but whatever they may be called, they were a singular development of human vanity, bringing impressively to mind the stanza of Burns:

"O wad some power the giftie gie us
To see ourselves as others see us!
It wad frae monie a blunder free us,
And foolish notion;
What airs in dress and gait wad lea'e us,
And e'en devotion!"

## LXII.

# CHANGES FOR THE BETTER.

MY observations have extended through a period of more than sixty years. In that time great changes have occurred in the condition of the country—material, financial, intellectual, social, moral, and religious. I shall limit my remarks chiefly to the religious changes. Let it be remembered that my observations were commenced in a plain rural district, and might have been very different had they been made in other portions of the country.

A marked change has taken place in the ministry of all religious denominations within the period of my recollection, and the change has been a decided improvement. To the change in the Baptist ministry my remarks will have special reference. It does not include an increase of piety. The fathers were as sincere, earnest, devout, and faithful as are the ministers of the present day. There was more asceticism in the piety of former. times, as there is more frivolity in that of the present day. With all their austerity, the fathers would drink whiskey, and never once suspected that the indulgence was wrong or dan-They would, however, have been horrified at such a conformity to the world as is now common among ministers in spirit, dress, and manners. In former times drunkenness would have been more readily excused than the playing of such a game as croquet. The fathers were sound in the faith, but their knowledge and instruction were limited to a few fundamental points, on which they strenuously insisted. Their preaching was sadly deficient in variety and in its adaptation to edify and stimulate their hearers. It is not wonderful that their ministry should have been defective. Most of them had no book but the common version of the Bible, and had never heard of a concordance, and then religious newspapers had not

begun their important career. The ministry of the present day is far more intelligent than was that of former times. strange that it should be. Schools, colleges, and professors, books, tracts, and newspapers, have been multiplied and brought within the reach of aspirants after knowledge. Most ministers are educated more or less thoroughly, and the uneducated have means of intellectual improvement far beyond those enjoyed in former times. Then it was no uncommon thing to hear sermons in which the preacher boasted that he was not dependent for his discourse on human "larnin," and who, by setting at naught all the rules of grammar, logic, and Scripture exegesis, proved that his boast was not vain. Now it is rare, in the city or in the country, for preachers, educated or uneducated, to deliver a sermon which in style, arrangement, and thought is not respectable. Some of our young ministers just from the seminary would have been deemed by many in the old times unfit to preach the gospel on account of their profound and varied learning—an opinion from which their teachers would be likely to dissent.

The improvement in the ministry has doubtless been largely owing to the better provision made for their support. Sixty years ago, it may be safely affirmed that, among all the Baptist ministers of Virginia, not one received an adequate or even a stinted support. They, like other men, were engaged in secular pursuits—agricultural, mechanical, mercantile, or professional—for the support of themselves and their families. Some of them had means, and could devote their time to the ministry. Others had genius, energy, industry, and a burning zeal, which, in spite of their disadvantages, made them mighty in winning souls for Christ. It is easy, however, to perceive how the average qualifications of ministers, under such circumstances, would be meagre and their sermons poor. Ministers supported in their work would be greatly responsible if they did not exceed in attainments and efficiency those who are compelled to blend their ministry with secular avocations. Churches must understand that if they desire to have pastors well equipped for their service they must be freed from worldly

cares, that, according to the apostolic exhortation, they may give themselves "wholly to the ministry." Our churches have made considerable progress in learning the divine rule that "they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel"; but there is still much for them to learn—at least to practice—in that direction.

A favorable change has been made in my days in the arrangements for religious worship. In my boyhood I did not know of a single neat and comfortable house of worship of any denomination. I do not remember seeing a brick house of worship in the country until about the time I commenced my ministry. Some of the "meeting-houses," as they were then universally called, were framed buildings, many of them unplastered, and most of them unpainted. No inconsiderable portion of them were built of logs. The house in which I received most of my early religious instruction was reared of logs, neither hewed nor barked, put together in a most unworkmanlike manner. It was never chinked, and a stout dog might have passed through its open cracks. The furniture of these buildings corresponded with their exterior appearance. They were supplied with narrow, low benches, without backs. Glass windows and stoves were rare, and curtains and cushions were quite unknown. Many of the "meeting-houses" would have been very uncomfortable stables for horses and mules.

Thirty or forty years ago the Baptists of Virginia were seized with quite a commendable zeal for the construction of good meeting-houses. Almost every church felt the necessity of improving its place of worship. All over the State houses for religious services were erected, some of wood and some of brick—spacious, convenient, and comfortable. They had not much to boast on the score of taste, but they were a great improvement over the shabby structures of previous times, and answered well the purposes of those for whose convenience and benefit they were erected. Some of them were destroyed by the fortunes, or, rather, the folly and wickedness of war, and many of them, through the stringency of the times, have suffered sadly for lack of paint and needed repairs; but still the

quality and condition of our houses of worship mark a great and favorable change.

There has been a striking improvement in the order of religious assemblies within the period of my memory. In some country places the disorder during public worship was shocking. Many persons went to the house of God, not to render homage to him, or to be instructed in his Word, but to amuse themselves by talking and laughing. They would go in or out of the place of worship according to their pleasure, and take pains to attract attention from the preaching of the gospel. Reproof did not restrain, but in many cases augmented the disorder. Nor was this misconduct limited to the lower and more degraded classes of society, but in many instances persons who claimed to be gentlemen were guilty of this rudeness, and really supposed that they showed their independence and high breeding by scorning reproofs from the pulpit. This disorder did not prevail in all places, nor in the same place in the same degree, at all times. I can only say that within the range of my early observation, and during the first few years of my ministry, there was much and most reprehensible disorder in many religious meetings. In this respect a very important change has taken place. In many congregations there may still be confusion from inconsiderateness and unwisely tolerated customs, but there are few neighborhoods in which an intelligent and dignified preacher would not receive respectful attention, or if there should be disturbers of the service, they would incur general and severe condemnation.

The piety of the present day is more practical than was that of the fathers. They laid great stress on soundness in doctrine. They were not to be blamed for this, but for failing to give due weight to other matters. Faith with them was too much a speculation. If a man was sound in the faith, he would not be disturbed if he were sound asleep. Preaching was largely polemic; and nothing was expected of the hearers but to accept what was taught. It was not altogether, but greatly, a system of faith without works, or, at least, with few. They believed, and were ready to fight for, "the five points," but

they contributed nothing for the support of their pastors, rarely attended prayer-meetings, gave nothing systematically for the poor, and of missions and Sunday-schools they had never heard. Their piety made the very slightest demand on their time, their purses, or their activities. Piety is now, much more than it was, a thing of life, and labor, and sacrifice among Christians. It lays a tax on the brain, the hand, and the purse. There is far more activity among Christians than there was sixty years ago. In missions, in Sunday-schools, in efforts for promoting education, and in the various organized modes of mitigating human misery and of increasing human virtue and happiness, their minds, their hearts, their hands, find constant if not sweet employment. Little is done compared with what might be and ought to be done, but still much in contrast with what was done or attempted to be done in former years.

The favorable changes made in our denomination in the last half century may well inspire us with gratitude to God and hope for the future. In number, intelligence, resources, and influence it has made great and gratifying progress. It has in itself the elements of vast and permanent prosperity. Our churches, however, can flourish only by piety and the activities to which it gives birth. Composed exclusively of a regenerate membership—at least, in profession—they can be sustained and increased only by earnest, believing efforts for the conversion of sinners. Should they become cold, formal, worldly, they may have a name that they live, but they will be dead. Should their zeal keep pace with their progress, a bright future is before them. If under so many disadvantages in the past their success was so satisfactory, what grand results may we not reasonably anticipate from their union, activity, and earnest prayers in the future?

## LXIII.

#### CHANGES FOR THE WORSE.

EVERY change of condition brings to churches, as well as to individuals, trials and perils. Prosperity has its evils as well as adversity. It is not reasonable to suppose that the Baptist denomination could have enjoyed uninterrupted prosperity for more than half a century without suffering evils. I propose to point out some unfavorable changes which it has undergone.

I have already noticed the marked improvement in the Baptist ministry, but it has been attended with some deductions. There is much more knowledge and good taste in the pulpit than there was in former years, but as it has gained in light and refinement, it has lost in unction and pathos. It imparts more instruction, but produces less impression. It may have more to do with the understanding and the conscience, but it has less power over the emotions and passions. There are no ministers East, West, North, or South, excepting, perhaps, a few evangelists, who so enchain, impress, and move their audiences as did Broaddus and Kerr. Nor was the power to affect their audiences confined to these masters of human hearts. The ability to move their hearers to tears was not uncommon among the old preachers. Formerly it was quite usual to see what is now rarely noticed—a whole congregation melted into tears.

This effect of the ministry of the fathers may be traced to two causes. First, they aimed directly to excite the feelings of their hearers. They thought that they had accomplished nothing if they drew no tears. Of course they sought by the themes they discussed and the tales they told, as well as by the tones of their voice and the vehemence of their manner, to impress and melt their congregations. And, next, their hearers were prepared and anxious to receive the proposed impression.

They were mostly a plain people, of little mental culture, and easily excited. When preachers and people were aiming at the same result, it is not strange that it should have been reached. Account for it as we may, it is certain that formerly preaching was addressed more to the heart and less to the head, and now it is addressed more to the head and less to the heart. Of course, it should be directed, in proper measure, both to the head and heart-both to man's intellectual and emotional nature. What I notice is, that while the ministry has gained in knowledge it has declined in pathos. There should not be less, but still more knowledge in the pulpit, but if possible—and possible it is—it should be secured without any diminution of that tenderness of feeling and that fervency of zeal which captivate the heart—a sensibility derived from pious meditation and communion with God—a sacred unction with which Paul taught the Ephesians, by the space of three years, "night and day with tears."

There is now in the worship, especially of city churches, more formality and less fervency than there was in former times. This change is particularly observable in singing. Sixty years ago this was a pleasing and popular part of Christian worship. Almost everybody could sing, and many could set and lead the music. The tunes used were plain, but solemn and impressive, and the songs and hymns were evangelical, if they were not refined poetry. While congregations were assembling, devout persons would set tunes, and all would unite in singing songs. Perhaps half a dozen hymns would be sung before the commencement of the pulpit services. In this singing there was perfect freedom. Any one, man or woman, might select a song and set a tune, with the assurance that all present would unite in the singing. In the public worship the minister lined out the hymn, and the whole congregation joined in the music. At the close of the sermon, it was not unusual for several songs appropriate to the discourse or the occasion to be sung with earnestness and delight.

Now a great change has taken place. Music is conducted chiefly by choirs. These are composed largely of the young

and volatile, and led by choristers, some of whom are not even professors of religion. The tendency is, more and more, to make church music a matter of taste and amusement rather than of devotion. The aim is, in many cases, to exalt the choir rather than the Redeemer, and the congregation are expected simply to hear and praise the music. The singing is an exhibition, not religious worship. Whether music has a tendency to make those who practice it irritable and perverse, I cannot say, but certainly, within the range of my knowledge, no class of persons is so frequently disturbed by jealousies, feuds, and incurable divisions as are church choirs. There are few churches which have not been annoyed by the bad temper and unpleasant jarring of their choirs. Meanwhile, church music, in what is commonly deemed its highest excellence, has lost its power to move the hearts and consciences of congregations. Many listen to it, and are pleased with it, as a matter of taste, but even in them it excites no devotional feelings, calls for no penitential tears, and awakens no holy desire, while the masses hear it with as much unconcern and with as little profit as they would the pattering of rain.

Baptists of the present day are better informed on religious subjects generally, but they are less carefully indoctrinated than were the fathers. We have books, magazines, newspapers more than we can read, and we gather a large amount of miscellaneous information—historical, biographical, statistical, and religious—but only slight attention is paid to the vital truths of Christianity. Few church members are capable of defending them by clear scriptural arguments. The fathers were men of one book-the Bible. They had little else to read, and they read it constantly and carefully. We remember an old brother in our youth who, when any doubtful question arose concerning divine truth, would always say: "Run the Scripter!" The language was unintelligible to persons unacquainted with his custom. He possessed, what was then rare, a pretty full Concordance of the Scriptures, and by running "the Scripter" he meant simply examining the questionable point by the aid of the Concordance. He would turn from verse to verse.

as guided by it, until he reached a satisfactory conclusion. If few had his Concordance to guide their researches, most united with him in reverence for the Bible, and in constant and earnest endeavors to understand it. To them its teaching was an end of all controversy. They believed nothing and practiced nothing for which they did not suppose they had a "Thus saith the Lord," and, having that, they cared little for the teaching of history or the speculations of theologians.

In nothing has there been so striking a change among Baptists, within the range of my observation, as in religious conversation. We have now much talk on topics more or less closely connected with religion. We hear much of plans for usefulness, the doings of conventions, the merit of preachers, the qualities of books, the progress of churches, and the like, but we rarely hear a conversation on personal piety. That was the almost universal topic among our fathers. Wherever and whenever they met they conversed of their experiences—the dealings of God with their souls. Children would listen with great interest to the accounts they gave of their conversion, their doubts and fears, their joys and hopes, and their conflicts with temptation. The young were strongly impressed with the reality and importance of religion by these unstudied but very sincere conversations, which were not unfrequently accompanied by tears.

In this matter it would be well for the churches to return to the ways of the fathers. Religious experience is a most suitable and appropriate theme of conversation. An experience every Christian must have. He could not have passed from death unto life without conviction of sin, painful conflicts with temptation, godly sorrow, earnest longings, fervent prayers, trust in Christ, joyful hope, and many alternations of feeling. He cannot have been long in the Christian life without much experience of his own weakness and wants, and of the mercy and faithfulness of his Redeemer. Most worthy themes of conversation are these. They have employed the tongues of the pious in all ages. "Come and hear, all ye that fear God," said the devout psalmist; "I will declare what he hath done

for my soul." The Psalms are little more than the record of God's gracious dealings with his servants. The apostle Paul repeatedly, in his sermons and in his epistles, referred to his wonderful experience—an experience attended with miraculous events, but in all its essential points the same as that of other believers. The Pilgrim's Progress, one of the most popular of uninspired books, is made up of religious experience, veiled and made attractive under an allegorical garb. Surely no argument can be needed to convince spiritually-minded persons of the propriety and profitableness of experimental conversation. It is desirable that among Christians there should be less frivolous and foolish jesting, and a more strict regard to the apostolic exhortation: "Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that ye may know how ye ought to answer every man."

## LXIV.

### THE ESTIMATE OF LIFE.

Life in prospect differs widely from life in the retrospect. To the young it appears in the roseate hues of hope. Tomorrow, they are assured, will be as to-day—but more abundant and joyous. They live in the future, and health, strength, wealth, fame, and happiness are among its certain possessions. To them life is a bright, delusive dream.

The young have their troubles. Disappointment, sickness, pain, bereavements, wants, and nameless sorrows may overtake them and momentarily dissipate their delusions, but their troubles are short-lived. They are soon forgotten and lost in the recovery of their blessings and in the anticipation of better times. Hard indeed must be the lot which crushes the spirits and extinguishes the hopes of the young.

Fortunate it is that troubles fall lightly on their hearts. Let them enjoy life; they will have ample time, if their days are prolonged, to endure afflictions. I was once ascending the Ohio river in a steamer. A heart-smitten widow was on board who had just buried her husband in Cincinnati, and was fleeing with her children from the cholera, which was raging as an epidemic. She had two little daughters, bright and cheerful, old enough, indeed, to know that they had lost their father, but too young and volatile to be long affected by their bereavement. Amid the scenes and excitements of the voyage the sprightly girls forgot their sorrows and gave themselves up to the pleasures of the occasion. The poor mother seemed almost as much grieved by the untimely frivolity of her children as by the sudden death of her husband. She tried by every art to repress their exuberant joy, and impart to them her own gloom and sorrow, but in vain. Nature would assert its control. Stranger as I was, I ventured to address words of consolation to the afflicted widow. It was cause for gratitude rather than grief that

her young and tender children did not fully share in her sorrows. It was better that they should enjoy life while they might, as, in all probability, their days of trouble would come, and not be few. With thoughts like these her crushed heart seemed soothed.

To the old, life is not a dream, but a reality. They contemplate it, not in the bright hues of fancy, but in the sober or even dark garb of experience. How different is life from the early anticipation of it. It was poetically described by the patriarch of Uz, four thousand years ago: "Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble. He cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down; he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not."

Life is short. It does not seem so to the young. When I was a boy my grandfather was a white-headed septuaginarian. It appeared to me to be impossible that I should ever attain to his age. A small eternity seemed to intervene between his age and mine. I am now just as old as he was at the time of his death; and how swiftly have my days passed by! Life in the retrospect always appears brief. "The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years," said the patriarch Jacob; "few and evil have the days of my life been." Moses, the man of God, harped on the same string: "The days of our years are three-score years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be four-score years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away." How truthfully is the life of man pictured by the inspired psalmist: "As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone." Some improvements have been made in the hygienic and healing arts, but still life, under the most favored circumstances, is brief and uncertain. No strength of constitution, no prudence. and no medical skill can extend it much beyond its usual limit.

Life is not only short, but "full of trouble." This language is strong, but it is confirmed by the experience of every person who has reached the age of three-score years and ten. Toils, vexations, disappointments, pains, losses, wants, and griefs for

which human ingenuity has scarcely found a name enter largely into the history of every life. Nor are these all, nor the worst of its evils. Temptation, sin in innumerable forms, guilt, remorse, godly sorrow, and ceaseless conflicts with the world, the flesh, and the devil "run through the rounds of three-score years and ten." Domestic relations, the source of man's highest enjoyments, are often the cause of his sorest trials. He shares in the afflictions of those whom he loves. The sharpest sorrows of parents are frequently the result of the waywardness. folly, vice, and misery of their children. National calamities derangement of trade, sectional and party strife, riots, and war with its fearful desolations—cast their shadows over many a household, and add greatly to the bitterness of individual experience. All the elements of nature seem to be at war with man. and commissioned to aggravate his misery. Fire burns his hard-earned property and turns him out a beggar on the world. The air that he breathes may be fraught with death and spread a wasting epidemic over the land. Water, one of Heaven's best gifts, may overflow the lands, wasting the products of man's toil, and leaving desolation, want, and sickness in its track. Heat and cold, which minister so much to man's comfort, may in their turn afflict and ruin him. These evils may in some measure be evaded, modified, or even turned to good, by prudence, piety, and fortitude; but sorrow and suffering, increasing to the close of life, are man's inevitable lot on earth.

As man grows older he becomes more profoundly convinced of his ignorance. In his youth he hopes to become wise. In his maturity he might have been seduced into the delusion that he had attained to wisdom. He must, however, be exceedingly indocile if he does not learn before he reaches the age of three-score and ten years that he "knows nothing as he ought to know." His highest attainment is to learn that he is a fool. He finds that everything within and around him is involved in impenetrable mystery. Matter, spirit, providence, law, sin, redemption, eternity, God, are all familiar terms designed to conceal his ignorance rather than to express his knowledge.

I have depicted the dark side of human life. It is, however, not all disappointment, gloom, and suffering. It has its comforts as well as its distresses, its joys as well as its sorrows, its hopes as well as its fears. As there is no life without its troubles, so, perhaps, there is no life without its enjoyments. There is a strange commingling of blessings and afflictions in human experience. Often the sorest trials bring the sweetest pleasures, and the purest delights end in the darkest sorrows.

Is this all of human life? Was man made merely to eat, drink, propagate his species, and perish forever? This is the teaching of infidelity, or the cheerless surmise of skepticism. If this conjecture is true, then life is a failure—a misfortune—in many cases a calamity. If there is nothing but matter, it is a pity there ever was any matter. Whether the happiness or the misery of life exceeds, philosophy has not been able to decide. Possibly in some cases happiness, and in other cases misery, predominates. One point is pretty certain—few, if any, persons desire to live over precisely the lives which they have experienced. On this subject I may bear testimony. have been more favored in life than a majority of my fellowbeings. Endowed with a vigorous constitution, enjoying a large share of health, surrounded by warm friends, engaged in congenial employments, having a fair measure of success in my labors, as free from afflictions as most of my friends, having a supply of the necessaries and comforts of life, with a heart to enjoy all my blessings, I have had great cause to be content with my lot. Few have enjoyed life more than I have. I can truly say, however, that I have no desire to live it over just as it has been. If I could carry back to childhood my experience and pass through my days more wisely and usefully, I should be pleased to do it; but to retrace my life, with all its joys and sorrows, all its follies, mistakes, and sins, I have no If life has nothing better than the past, it is more desirable not to be than to be. This is the dictate of revelation, as well as the testimony of experience. "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable." The apostle assumes that all men are miserable, and

affirms that Christians, but for the hope of immortality, would be the most miserable of them all.

If life is a probation, designed to fit man for a higher and better state of existence, it rises to sublime importance. That it is a probationary state, seems probable from the light of nature. That the universe, with its infinite variety of wise adapations, did not spring from blind chance or unconscious matter, the unbiased human intellect is forced to admit. The only alternative is that it was created by a Being of infinite wisdom, power, and goodness. Human life is a mystery. For what was man created? Not for misery. His manifold blessings and enjoyments forbid this supposition. Not simply for happiness. His various and unavoidable sufferings are at variance with this theory. The supposition that life is a trial, a discipline, a preparation for another state, solves the mystery. With this theory man's conscience and aspirations after immortality perfectly harmonize.

What seems probable in the dim light of nature is made certain in the clearer light of revelation. Life is but the introduction to man's permanent existence. Christ has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. lieve that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him." If Jesus did not rise from the dead, there is no light in the world and no hope for man. If Jesus rose from the dead, his resurrection was a part of a divine scheme involving the redemption of his disciples. Did he rise from the dead? In all the history of the world there is no fact so fully authenticated as the resurrection of Jesus. The most astute and skeptical men believe and stake their interests on facts which have not a tithe of the proof in their support which confirms that event. It was testified by competent witnesses, who could not have been deceived, and who furnished the most illustrious evidences of their sincerity. It gained credence, in spite of all the prejudices arrayed against it, among Jews and gentiles, and in defiance of the bitter persecutions of priests and rulers, with intelligent people, in the very land and in the very age of its occurrence. If Christ was not raised from the dead, the triumph of Christianity in the Roman empire was a more wonderful and inexplicable mystery than the resurrection of Jesus itself.

I "believe that Jesus died and rose again." Here I rest my This fact sheds light upon the condition and destiny of man. It solves a thousand questions otherwise unanswerable. It is an unfailing source of consolation amid all the toils, sorrows, and disappointments of life. It imparts significance and grandeur to life. It sheds a lustre on the otherwise dark and dismal tomb. It lifts the curtain that conceals eternity, and gives us glimpses of its ineffable glory and of its unmixed and unending felicity. Life is a blessed thing, an inestimable possession to them that wisely use it. It is the birth of immortality—the dawn of a day which will be darkened by no clouds. disturbed by no storms, and succeeded by no night. Surely every Christian may join in the apocalyptic doxology: "Unto him that hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood, and hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."





